

Le Minotaure



Volume Twelve

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Le Minotaur Magazine: Volume Twelve

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Cover picture: Adam with two of his women ... Lilith and Eve.

If you have a submission for the **Le Minotaur** feel free to send it along to the magazine.

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Table of Content

Le Minotaure	7
Artwork	8
Life Drawing Class in a Strip Club by Robert Glaubke.....	9
Pictorial: What's wrong with this picture?.....	17
Pamela Green a British Figurative Icon by Rob Roberts.....	18
Call for Minotaur Art	23
Two Sisters by Annie Gavani.....	24
Some Figuratives from Figure Magazine, 1956.....	26
Pictorial: Looks She's Not Wearing Any Clothes!	34
Playing with a Feather on My Thirtieth Birthday by Aki	35
Pictorial: How Often do They Cheat?	45
Prose.....	46
How Will I Manage ... by Isabella Montsouris	47
My Good Friend in Vancouver by Ayaka Miro.....	51
Pictorial: Come Join Me There is Room for Two	55
Do You Know What it Means? by William Webster	56
If you don't want to do silly things ... by Sharon B	59
Pictorial: Caught in a Corner.....	60
On the Streets of Paris by Rose Lang.....	61
Memories of Montmartre by Julius Price.....	62
Pictorial: What Are You Looking At?	74
Niccolo Machiavelli by Sir Bertrand Russell.....	75
The Ring by Anais Nin.....	87

Pictorial: Something Very Alone and Very Insignificant	92
The Philosopher who Philosophizes by Henry Miller	93
Pictorial: Henry Miller by Brassai	100
The Beautiful Spy Who Found High Adventure by Kurt Singer.....	101
 Poetry	126
Two Poems by Shannon Ayres	127
Poems by Patrick Bruskiewich.....	130
Pictorial: That Must Tickle!	144
Erotic Poems by Tia Tai.....	145
Pictorial: Say Cheese! ... MAGA ..	165
 Popcorn	166
Bachelorette Bob by Joanna M....	167
The Phallic Iceberg by Ryan Clark	170
An Instrument of Pleasure and of Pain by Emilie Wu	171
Pictorial: A Mother Expecting ...	176
My Afternoon with a Knob ... by Samantha	177
Swedish Cheesecake by Constance Tomkinson	189
Pictorial: Tommy have a piece of cake. Thanks Mom!	222
 The Surreal and DaDa.....	223
Dada X Y Z by Hans Richter	224
Pictorial: I Love Those Jugs!	232
End of the World by Richard Huelsenbeck.....	233
Pictorial: The Story of my Life	235
After the Cabaret Voltaire by Emmy Hennings	236
 Novella: Pas a Deux by Patrick Bruskiewich.....	237

Pictorial: A Little Venus in her Oyster Shell 247

“Oh what the hell I will let him do his art ... as long as he made me a fine lunch!”

Isabella Montsouri

Le Minotaur

Le Minotaur Press of Vancouver is delighted to publish the twelfth edition of ***Le Minotaur*** Magazine which serves to explore the beast in all of us.

In this edition we have contributions from the two Roberts, from Isabella, Megan, from Ayaka, Rose and William, as well as from Sharon, Shannon and Samantha.

Please feel free to submit your short stories, prose, poetry and artwork to

penny_plenty321 @ yahoo.com

There is no fee to submit. There is no writer's fee provided by the journal for those who submit. The publishing rights remain with the author.

Le Minotaur welcomes submissions on a quarterly basis.

Artwork

Life Drawing Class in a Strip Club by Robert Glaubke

[San Francisco] If you'd like a real liberal education and a chance to sketch the kind of poses you'll never see in any life class, grab your sketch pad and head for the nearest strip club. It'll be an experience that will open your eyes and test your talents for seeing. It will also cost you much less than hiring an artist model.

I've always liked fast sketching of people and the life around me. I see things and I itch to get them down on paper. The first time I realized the sketching possibilities in night clubs was several years ago during a visit to *Mardi Gras* in New Orleans.

The town has a tremendously exciting atmosphere for an artist. The night life is throbbing and vital, it flows around you so fast you feel frustrated in not being able to get it all down.

I didn't have time to do as much sketching as I wanted during *Mardi Gras* and later when I returned home, I realized the excellent material there was in my own backyard in the strip joints.

I visited half a dozen spots and was able to get on paper the kind of sketches you never can capture in a life class.

I had no idea of how I'd be received at these night clubs. I didn't think I'd have any trouble but there was always the chance somebody would object and I'd

be thrown out on my ear. Usually when I've sketched in any kind of public place I expect, sooner or later, to have at least three or four eager beavers peering over my shoulder. In the strip joints, they couldn't have cared less. All eyes are riveted on the stripper. Nobody paid any attention to me.



It's pretty dark in most of these places and since I tried to get a seat at a table whenever I could. I was usually in the worst lit spot. I wanted the table so I'd have a flat surface for my pad. The bar would have been too close.

It was strictly "blind sketching." I used a sketching pad with a good tooth and two pens, a ball point and a standard fountain sketching pen loaded with India ink.

It was too dark to see much of what I was sketching and I soon found out that the best I could do was to get down quick mental notes on the pad. The action of the dancers is too fast to give you much time. After watching for a while saw that all of the strippers followed certain characteristic movements. They strike certain poses which are similar in all strip teases.



There's the bump and grind pose. They arch their back, the legs are flexed in a half crouch, the pelvic region, the belly and the hips are moved in and out and rolled suggestively. They all do this.

Another is the shimmy and shake. They stand almost straight with the back slightly arched, the legs spread wide and the head and arms thrown back. In this position they shake the body sideways and the whole anatomy quivers.



Another standard pose and one in which there are more individual variations is the essence of teasing. Dancing slowly, they close their eyes, or sometimes look right at some male at the bar, they stroke their bodies sensuously with their hands, running them up along their thighs and belly and cupping their breasts.

I guess this is the routine that separates the women from the girls in the stripping business. A good stripper with a good body doing this can really stir up the crowd.

I concentrated on these characteristic poses, trying to catch quick impressions, just enough to capture the movement or a gesture that would flow into the rest of the pose. I wanted to stop one specific action and keep it fixed in my mind.

I tried to get the main action of the spine, shoulders and hips in relation to the limbs and flying hair which sort of swished in. If you can get these down, the filling in can be left to the imagination.



I didn't try to do any one girl. All I got was a fleeting impression of facial and body types, I made sketch notes on hairdos, makeup, costumes and the like and later incorporated these in the finished paintings. From my sketches I could have done any kind of girl.

Looking over my rough sketches later, in the studio, I realized they made excellent mental notes, I could look at them and have the whole picture in my mind. The only trouble was recalling the effect of the lighting. I solved this problem by calling in a model.



I shot some pictures of her using a single light to simulate the spot that was on the dancers and with these as lighting notes I started on the paintings.

I work in caseins mostly. Since these were to be reproduced in block and white, I did them with only these two colors, sometimes using a little brown in the blacks to warm them up, I worked on regular illustration board, doing a light pencil sketch of the picture first to work out the composition elements and then started right in with the caseins. The figure of the stripper was the dominant factor in the pattern of all the pictures, I worked the customers and atmosphere in around this figure.

Using casein I get a very painty feeling when I'm working. It's fast drying and I work very fast and loose with it trying to get down the spontaneous quality of my sketches. The pictures are real sketches in paint carried further than my

preliminary notes. I like to create right in my paintings and get a strong working feel as I brush the paint in and manipulate it on the board.



Doing some of the paintings I had to restrain myself from slowing down and tempting to work the edges or do detail. Whenever I did this, the painting blew up in my face. All of the spirit just went out of it. They lost all feeling of spontaneity. I had to work rapidly with bold strokes and strong dynamic curves. I stippled in the dark shadows of the background with a sponge sopped in the paint. Then with a dry brush I swirled in the smoke patterns in whites and grays over the black, trying to suggest currents of movement.

On the bodies of the strippers I tried for lots of motion by swishing in the hair, exaggerating the lines of dominant muscles, and the tossings of the costumes as the dancer twisted and turned. I used all of these things wherever I could to

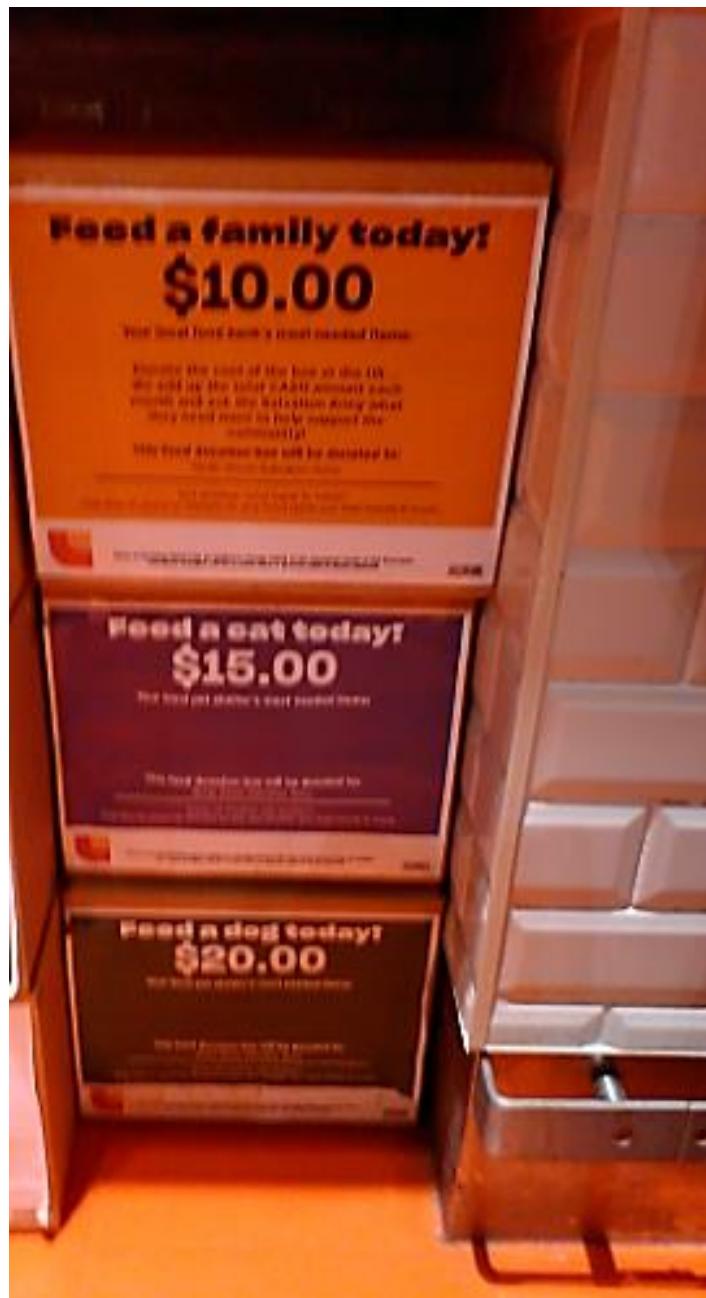
add to the aggressiveness of the completed picture and give it the impact I wanted.

When I finished, I had worked myself into a high pitch and had to sort of simmer down. I was very happy with the paintings. I don't think I could ever have got the some results if I had tried to do a more finished style on them. With this subject matter, the loose bold approach was very appropriate and made them all the more effective.

The whole project was stimulating and a valuable experience. I really learned things about anatomy and action. I had the discipline of working under adverse conditions and later developing the notes I made into paintings, and most of oil I had a wonderful time.



Pictorial: What's wrong with this picture?



Pamela Green a British Figurative Icon by Rob Roberts

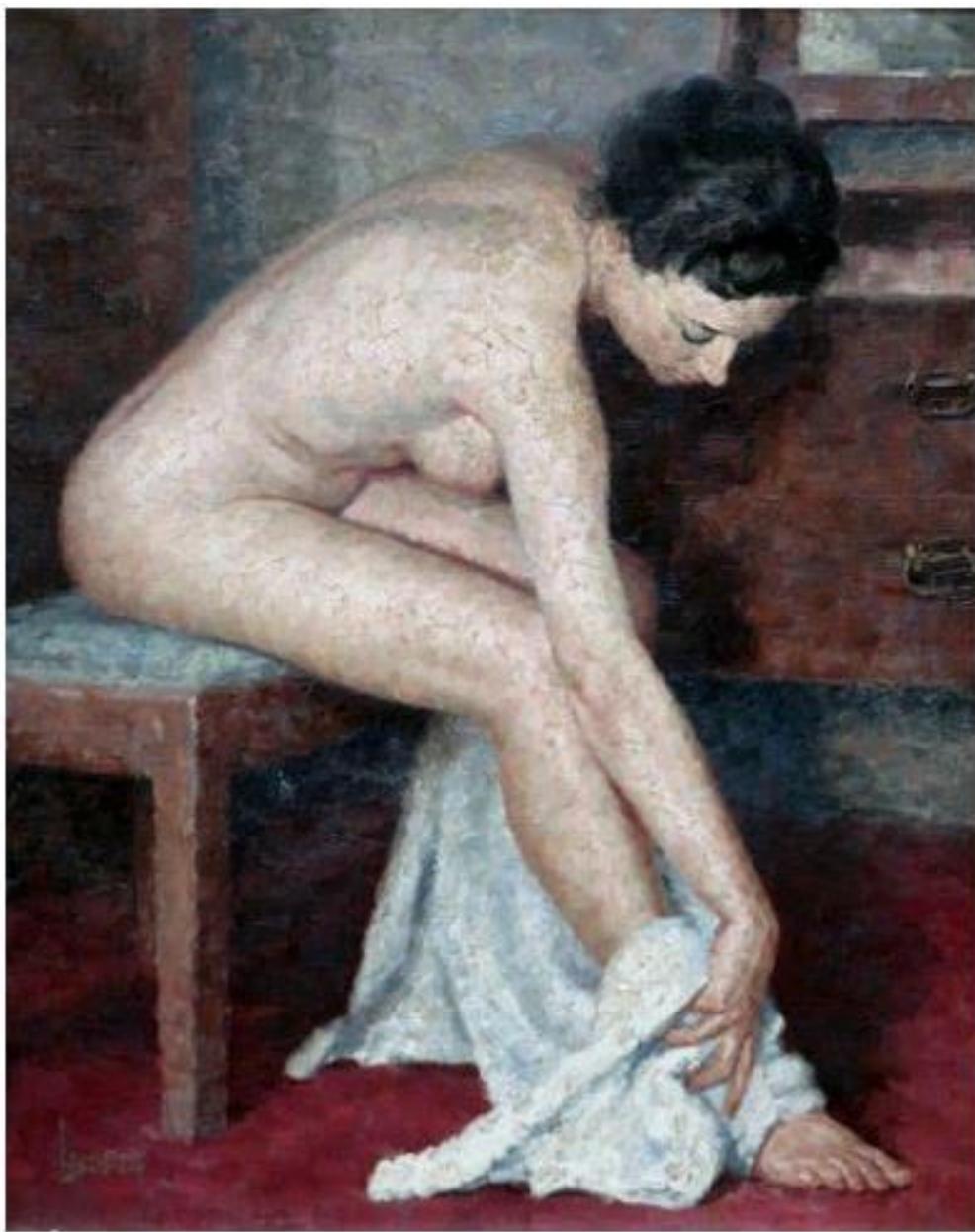
[London] Pamela Green was a British Figurative Iron from the 1960's through to the end of the 1970's. She was made famous in photographs and films by Harrison Marks. There is even a website dedicated to her legacy.

In the 1950's Pamela got started as a traditional artist's mode for some British artists such as Leonard Boden. You may note she is a natural brunette.



Pamela Green modelling for Leonard Boden. Circa 1954

One of the Boden paintings of her in the pointillist style is rather beautiful.



Nude Painting of Pamela Green by Leonard Boden.

In her youth Pamela had a stunning figure, as you can see in the following rendering of her as a slave for sale to a harem ...



Here is another photograph by Harrison Marks of her sitting ...



In the 1960's being blonde became fashionable and so Pamela went blonde.

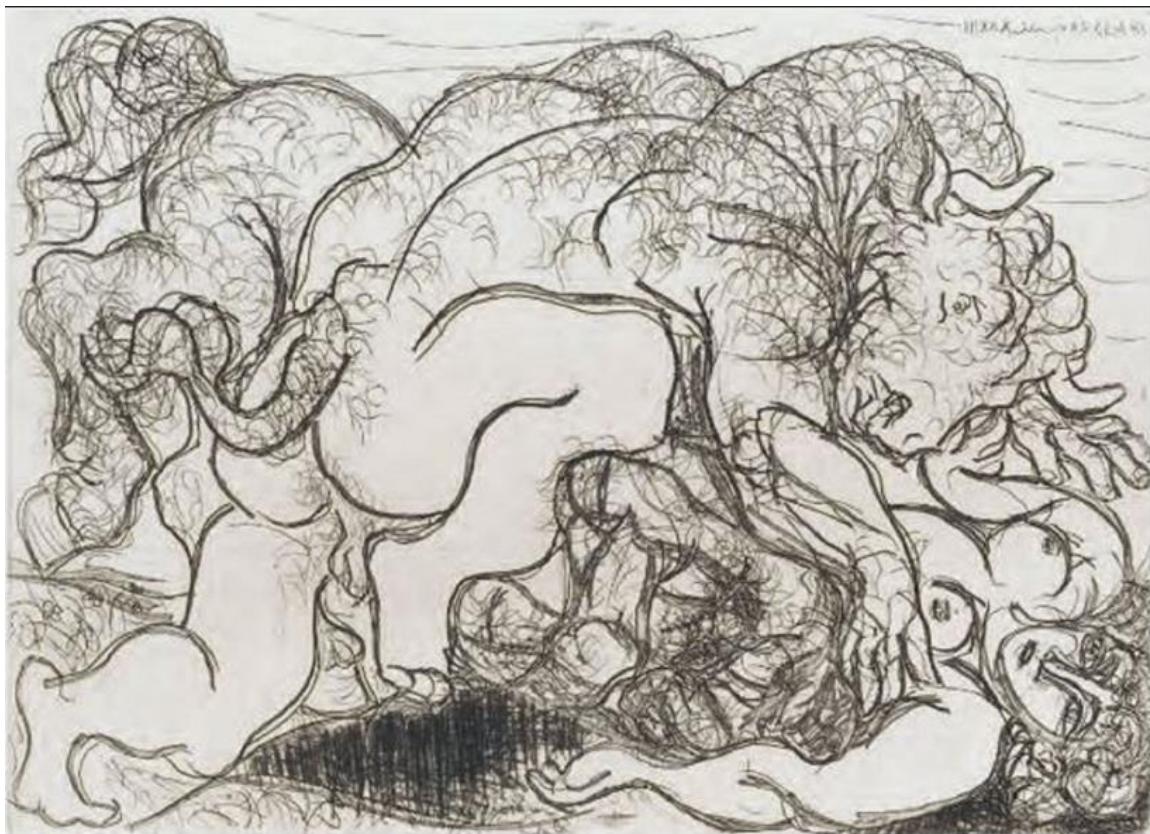
To many here in Britain Pamela became more popular than Marilyn Monroe and even Margaret Nolan.



Quite a few pub brawls in the 1960's began with the simple question who do you prefer Pam or Marg ...

Call for Minotaur Art

Le Minotaur Magazine invites our readers to send in their original Minotaur Art, to be featured on the cover or within our Magazine.



Send your submissions as either jpeg or as pdf and include an artist's statement of perhaps 200 words.

Two Sisters by Annie Gavani





Some Figuratives from Figure Magazine, 1956

















Pictorial: Looks She's Not Wearing Any Clothes!



Playing with a Feather on My Thirtieth Birthday by Aki

On my thirtieth birthday I was invited to visit the studio of an artist friend. At the time I was profoundly unhappy with my boy-friend ... he had been unfaithful to me.

My artist friend knew how sad I felt and so he arranged a special thirtieth birthday gift for me. When I arrived at his studio there was a note on the door saying it was unlocked and I should come in ... There he lay asleep for me to admire ... Next to him on the table was a camera and a note ...



And so I picked up the camera and started to take pictures of his beauty ...



The note on his loin cloth said ‘*keep this on or take this off, your choice.*’ I carefully took it off ever so carefully. There was another note wrapped around him ...



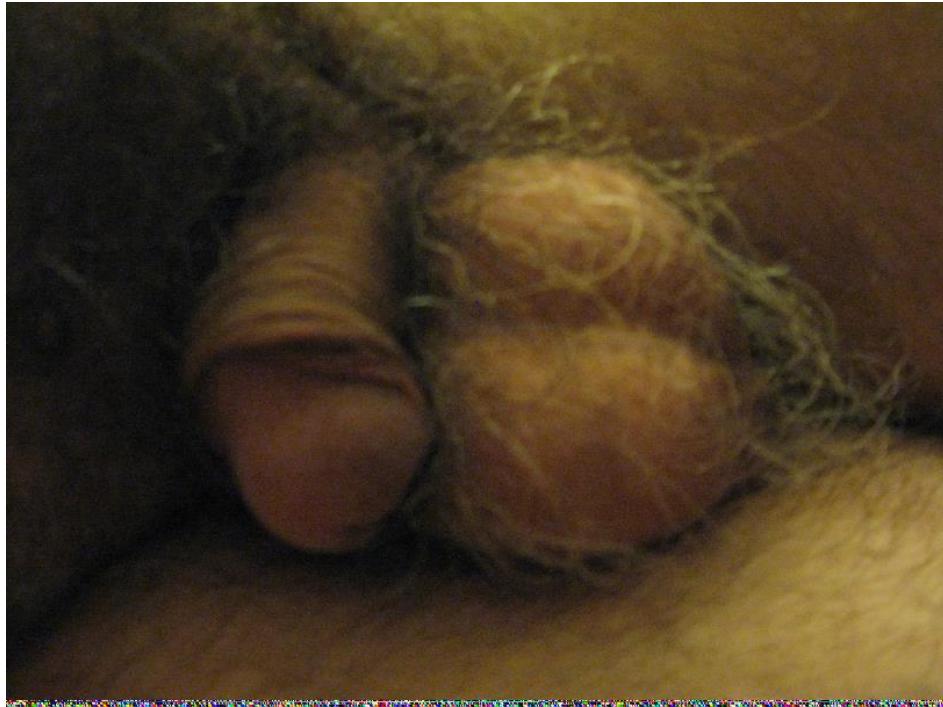
So I tugged on the ribbon and unwrapped him.



The note said ... '*touche ou touche pas. C'est ta choix.*'

I wanted so much to reach out and touch him. I wanted so much to play with his marbles ... most girls like to. But I knew if I touched him he would wake and the magic of this moment would be lost.

He rolled on his side. And so I came very very close and just blew onto his masculinity and talked to it.



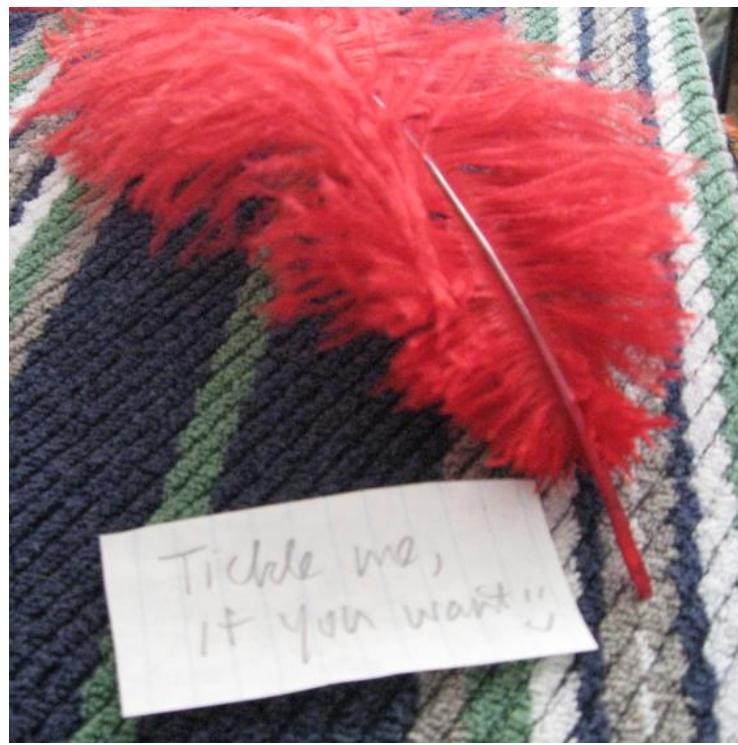
And it listened to me ... How soft and so vulnerable he seemed laying there.



It started to stir ...



Still he was asleep. There was a bright red feather and another note ...



And so I started to tickle him and he began to grow and grow ...



I tickled him as I might want to be tickled and imagined how the feather would feel against my softness ...



Slowly I tickled his belly, his penis and his marbles, and his thighs ...



And I watched in amazement as slowly he grew in length and girth.



He became more and more pink and inviting to me.

I fought the urge to take him in my hand and tease him...

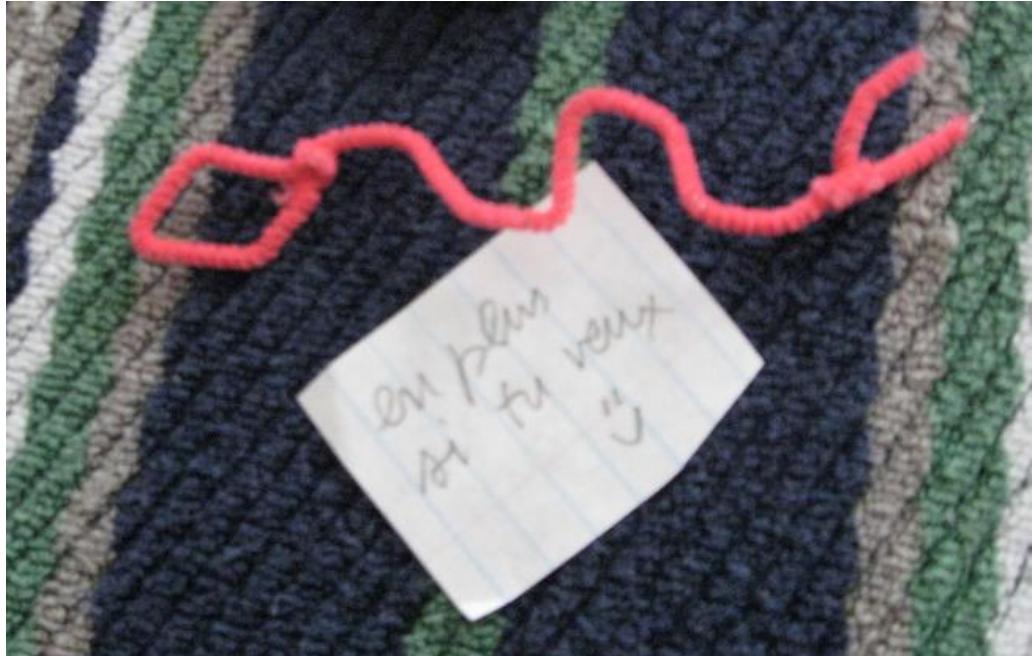
I imagined how he would feel inside of me and I could feel my wetness ...

I took off my panties and fought the urge to mount him, there and then.

I watched as he arched higher and higher into the sky ...



Out of the corner of my eye I saw another note ...



The note said *en plus si tu veux*.

Did he want me to mount him? But he was asleep and sex would just complicate things.

My boy-friend might accuse me of being unfaithful ... Should I stop now?
Was I being unfaithful? If I stopped who would I be unfaithful to but myself.

He was offering himself as a gift to me so I continued on ...

I took his hand in mine and guided him to my wetness ...

The moment his fingers touched the softness of me ... he came ...

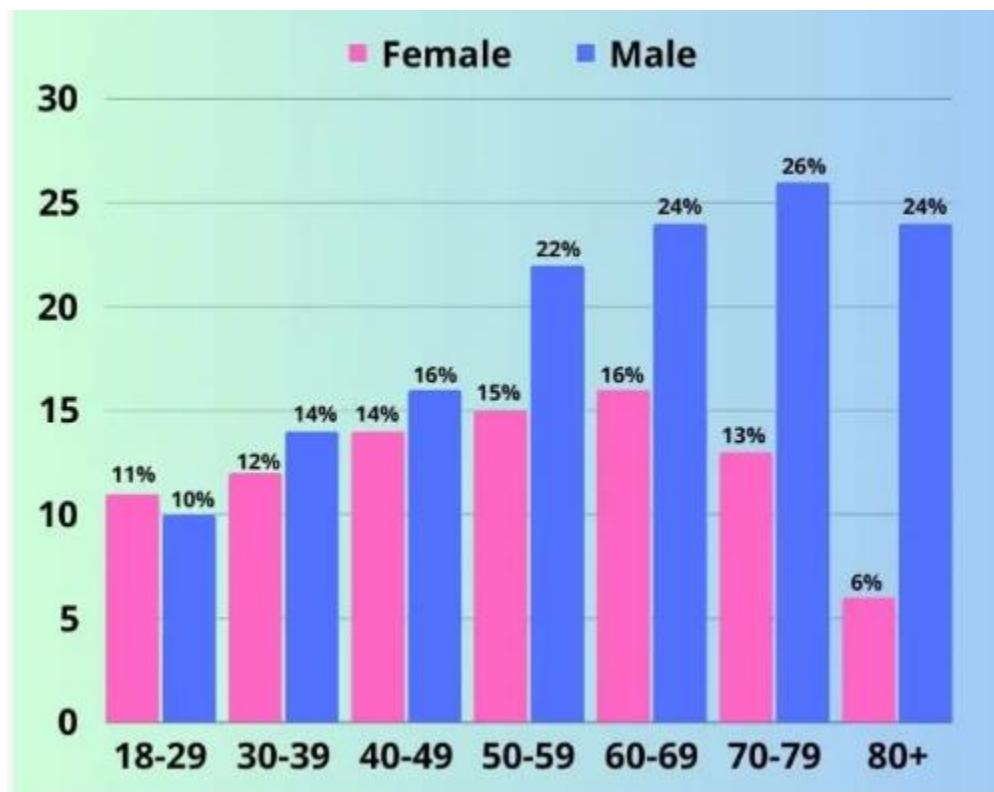


And awoke ... '*Oh Hi ... it's you. I thought I was dreaming*'.

Together he and I had the happiest smiles in the world. What came next you can only imagine.

Later that same evening I broke up with my boy-friend.

Pictorial: How Often do They Cheat?



Prose

How Will I Manage ... by Isabella Montsouris

[Montreal] I am in my twenties now and finding life as an adult a bit daunting. The past five years have been anything but pleasant for me. I guess I shouldn't complain because I am in good company. Together we have all gotten through Covid and now this summer for added drama there are wildfires and smoke in the air across central Canada.

Montreal was once renown for its *joie de vivre* but now you have to look long and hard to find it. Many of the old popular night spots have had to shut down because they were losing money and those that are still in business charge outrageous prices or water down their drinks. Some of my friends took me to a dive that can only be described as a speak-easy ... unlicensed to say the very least. I stuck to the bottled beer. One of the group tried spicy chicken wings and ended up in the hospital the next day with food poisoning. It was a reminder why some people spice up their food ... to hide the fact the food is not edible. I guess you get what you paid for ...

One of my neighbors, *Vieux Pierre* as he is known, is in his eighties and is a retired four star chef from one of the hotels. He has taken to opening his place once a month for a gourmet gathering. It is a pot luck where he provides the wine and the main course. Since I have known him several years, and since he has a liking for me, he has invited me to a few of his dinners. His is a rather wonderful idea for, for the price of a pot luck dish that can feed six, you get a meal that is now pretty near impossible to find anywhere else in Montreal.

Something that makes his evenings special is that he is on very good terms with the sommelier at several of the posh Montreal hotels and so the wines and spirits that we enjoy are indescribable. As a special treat he gave me a sip of Napoleon brandy that dated back over three hundred years. I was dizzy after the treat ... and didn't know whether it was because of the excitement or the eighty proof of the brandy!

I sometimes come over early to help out and many times stay a bit late afterwards to help clean up. After the brandy I was in no state to drive home so he let me crash out on his couch. He was a perfect gentleman.

The following morning for breakfast he made me a Tunisian style omelet to die for and served the most remarkable Turkish coffee. He used real silverware and cups that were so rare and unique. I should tell you his apartment is filled with priceless art and antiques that he started to collect when he was a teenager in the 1940's.

Over our *apres le repas* coffee we chatted and he told me that all his old friends did not survive Covid and it was only because he did not smoke *les maudits cigarettes* as he called them, that he was the sole survivor of a group that had stayed together since grade school. But he didn't dwell on that ... 'what is the use to be sad when you can be happy.' Pierre is indeed a kitchen philosopher.

Vieux Pierre told me that he decided to become a chef because that was his way of bringing happiness to his world ... and to his personal world as well. “I was never too good at school but I was very good at cooking.” Then he let the cat out of the bag. His gourmet gathering patrons are the sons and daughters, grandsons and granddaughters of his lost friends ...

“*But what about me?*” I naively asked.

Pierre took a sip from his coffee cup and carefully set it down upon the saucer. “I like you so please don’t take what I am about to say wrongly.” He stared into the coffee for a moment before continuing. “While I was never married ... I have always enjoyed the company of women.” He looked up at me, his eyes sparkling in the morning sun.

“Your grandmother and I went to grade school together. She was very beautiful at all stages in her life ... when she was young, when she was married and when she was widowed. She would sometimes come and visit when she needed to be cheered up. I would make her something sweet and special then she would sit for me as I drew, painted or sculpted her.”

I don’t know why I did this but I began to feel aroused.

“A man can be a boyfriend, fiancé and husband. That is the conventional world. Since I was too busy working long hours in the kitchen I had to live an unconventional world.” He paused and took another sip of his coffee and

then stared down into the bottom of the cup almost as if he was foretelling his fortune on the coffee grounds ... should he continue?

“Unconventional?” I wanted him to continue his story.

He looked up at me. His eyes no longer sparkled. They appeared both sad and sheepish in fact as if he had suddenly got very old and tired.

“Are you ok?” I asked.

“I will be in a moment ... I was just remembering the beauty and art of all my women friends who have passed away the past few years. I miss them ... a man can also be a muse ... *un intime et meme un jeu jeu pour une femme ...*”

I understood what he meant and was suddenly overcome with pity for *Vieux Pierre* and reached across the table with my hand, touching his hand ever so lightly. “Don’t be sad ... you have made a new friend. I love art too ...”

Then *Vieux Pierre* started to cry.

Oh what the hell I will let him do his art ... as long as he made me a fine lunch!

My Good Friend in Vancouver by Ayaka Miro

On my last day of my first trip to Vancouver, a friend and I decided to walk around the center of downtown. We stopped and had some photograp0hic fun behind the old courthouse, which is now the Vancouver Art Gallery. I took these pictures of my friend.

Here he is holding up the building!



Here I am holding him up.



And here I am measuring him up to size.



My friend helped me out in so many ways. I came to Vancouver with a broken heart. My fiancé of three years had decided to break up with me and I needed to cheer myself up. I met my Vancouver friend at a conversation club meet that met in a café on Granville Street. After the meet I was sitting on a bench crying. He walked up to me, sat beside me and asked me why I was so sad ... I felt I could trust him to understand so I told him what had happened to me! We chatted awhile and the made arrangements to meet the next Saturday.

After a few weeks of chatting with him I was happy again. He suggested when I returned to Japan that I find myself three boyfriends. I said I would find five ... and I did!

A few weeks into my visit a Korean friend and I visited his Atelier for an afternoon of tea and conversation about art. Here we are waiting for the bus after our happy visit. In case you are wondering I am wearing the hat ...



After our day walking through downtown it was time for me to take the subway and go home to pack. I was leaving for Tokyo then next day.



When I got back to Tokyo I pushed myself to get back out into the world and start dating. I was twenty-six when I visited Vancouver for the first time.

If you are thirty and you are not married in Japan you are thought too old. Within a few months I had three boyfriends ... but that is a story for another day. I will tell you that I would make another trip to Vancouver later that year and that my story does have a happy ending back home in Japan.

Pictorial: Come Join Me There is Room for Two ...



Do You Know What it Means? by William Webster

[New York] I was on the subway last weekend when something rather unique happened. Some young boys swore and an elderly man took them to task about their swearing. To my great surprise the young boys did not mind being taken to task. It was perhaps how the elderly man chastised the boys that got them to tone down their rhetoric.

It all started when one of the boys used the f-word rather loudly.

From behind his newspaper a voice arose, clearing his throat. He folded the newspaper on his lap. The old man turned to them and said “you’re awfully young to have served at sea in the Navy.” He spoke with a British accent.

The young man was perplexed … paused then exclaimed “what the f*%k!”

“That’s a naval term you just used … you’re awfully young to have served at sea in the Navy,” the elderly man repeated.

The young man went silent … he stared sternly at the old man yet was speechless. His three friends just stood there passively beside him.

“Don’t you know what it means?” the old man pressed on.

“Sur’ I du o’ man.” The young boy stated defiantly.

Usually when people rub against each other on the subway something awful happens. Yet ... I watched the old man play the boy like a conductor plays a solo performer. He knew things would turn out fine.

“So then ... what does it mean?”

“It’s what me and my gyrl does every Sat’rday night ... we f*%k.” He and his friends chuckled but I noticed he said the f-word with less of an edge to it.

“So you fornicate under consent of the King do you?” The elderly man smiled as he said this.

“Huh!”

He continued. “You fornicate under consent of the King ... that what it means ... does the king pay you to do this?” Perhaps the old man was trying to wear him down ...

The boy put his arms bent at his side and stood like a super-hero and said “Naw ... my gyrl does it for fre’.”

The way he said this was so comical that people all around him started to chuckle. The boy nearly took this badly except the old man had a twinkle in his eye and it looked like the young boy was taking a liking to him. He looked around and realized that the people with laughing with him ... not at him.

The boy smiled. “Most times people j’st t’l me to shut the f*%k up!”

“It’s Saturday today ...”

“Yup!” The timing was perfect. They had come to their stop.

“Have fun ...”

The doors opened, the boy half-waved at the elderly man, then dashed from the train with his friends in tow.

The old man casually went back to the newspaper he was reading and everything went back to normal.

Something far from awful had just happened

If you don't want to do silly things ... by Sharon B ...

[Los Angeles] This year was my second year at university. First year I lived in a dorm. It was rather boring. My parents wanted me to just focus on my studies and not be distracted by other things. I managed perfect marks in all my classes, so in second year my parents gave me a bit more freedom. During second year I thought I might live in a sorority instead of a dormitory. Boy was it a crazy year for me. I think I managed to party a bit too much. My marks slipped noticeably. My parents are now angry at me.

There were also things I did that I later regret! To join the sorority they get you to do silly things. Here is perhaps the silliest of the things. No that's not me *tickling my fancy*. I am one of the girls in the background.



If you don't want to do silly things ... don't join a sorority!

Pictorial: Caught in a Corner



On the Streets of Paris by Rose Lang

[Paris] Ma grandmère was very wise. I guess most grandmothers are, but mine was wise beyond any doubt. She had lived through the Spanish Flu as a little girl, then the depression that came afterwards as a teenager. She was in her twenties during the 39-45 war, then got married and had her children in the fifties and then look after us grandchildren when we came along.

During these many decades she learned a great deal about people *et La Ville de Paris*. She would watch the city and be able to tell us what was the true state of the world. She once told me, “*don’t watch the people on the streets during the day ... watch the cats and the rats at night.*”

When Covid began I remembered what she had told me. I started to watch the streets at night. I noticed the number of cats on the street went down and the number of rats started to increase. The cats were finding good homes and the rats were being left alone. After three years of Covid I think the number of rats has nearly doubled!

Now that Covid is over the number of cats on the streets is slowly increasing. People are no longer as lonely and are leaving their doors open for the cats to come and go. Ah ... you say, the fun is about to begin. Soon there will be many fat cats and fewer rats on the Streets of Paris! We’ll soon see if you are right ...

Memories of Montmartre by Julius Price

There were, of course, many cafes in Montmartre frequented by artists—the Nouvelle Athenes on the Place Pigalle and the one on the Place Blanche, to mention only two where we used to go occasionally.

Alluding to these cafes reminds me of a very curious though perhaps amusing experience I had on one occasion. A charming lady (they were all charming in those days) had promised to lunch with me, and wrote to say she would meet me at the cafe on the Place Blanche at one o'clock. I was delighted, and got there ten minutes before the time so as not to keep her waiting. I ordered an aperitif, and not having read the paper that morning I called for the Figaro. Absorbed in my reading I did not notice the time; then suddenly I thought of it, and looked at my watch. It was half-past one. She was half an hour late; surely something must have happened to prevent her keeping the appointment. Quite suddenly it flashed through my mind as I looked around that our rendezvous was at the cafe on the Place Blanche, and that I was seated at the Nouvelle Athenes on the Place Pigalle. How it came about I cannot explain, except that it must have been a fit of abstraction on my part.

In no time at all I had paid the waiter, and was running as fast as I could to the Place Blanche, a few hundred yards distant—but she was not there. When I got back to my room after lunch I found a note from her telling me she had waited for half an hour, and hoped there had been no misunderstanding as to the appointment. She was good-natured enough to forgive me, and lunched with me another day, when I explained the contretemps, putting it down, as

she said laughingly, to my *temperament d'artiste*. Not many women would have been so kind. At the opposite corner of the Place Pigalle was the Rat Mort, then a place of unpleasant repute even for Montmartre—as it had the reputation of being frequented only by ladies and gentlemen of certain proclivities. Still it gradually seemed to improve, and, the usual habitués migrating elsewhere, it then got to be known that they gave an excellent table d'hôte dinner with vin à discretion at 2.25, and it was by degrees taken up till at last one could actually be seen going in without any chaffing remarks being made after-wards; while it eventually also became a place where one sat outside and took one's coffee and so forth.

The life on the Place Pigalle was very interesting to watch from the *terrasse* of either of the cafés, especially of an evening before dinner; there was always a stream of petites *ouvrières* on their way home, and if it were at all muddy one would get a gratuitous display of dainty ankles.

I remember sitting with some pals out-side the Rat Mort one summer evening taking our aperitifs. It had been raining but had cleared up. We were in a larky sort of mood. Suddenly one of us exclaimed, “What a lovely leg that girl’s got crossing over there; if her face is anything to match she must be a real beauty.”

“Well, it’s easily found out,” I remarked.

“How?”

“By going after her and having a look, of course,” I replied, making a movement as though I were about to do so; but at that moment the object of our curiosity turned round to avoid a passing cab, and revealed the most charming of faces and figures. She was indeed chic and attractive, and we all gave an exclamation of approval.

“You are so daring, Price,” said one of the chaps—“I’ll tell you what I’ll do. I’ll bet you five francs you don’t go after her and bring her back to dinner.”

“I don’t like to encourage your extravagance,” I replied in the same vein. “but I’ll take on your bet all the same.”

“I’ll make it a bottle of wine as well, that you don’t even get her to speak to you.”

“Done with you,” I replied, and picking up my hat and stick I dashed across the road after the beautiful stranger. I felt that my reputation as a “blood” was at stake, so had no hesitation. — Just as she reached the opposite side of the Boulevard, and was walking up the Rue Houdon, I caught her up. I was breathless both with excitement and with hurrying. Without pausing I raised my hat and blurted out, “Pardon me, Mademoiselle, for speaking to you, but will you help me make a fortune?”

She stopped dead, and looked at me with astonishment, amazed for a moment at my impertinence in speaking to her, for she was evidently not the type of girl to be à la recherche d'une aventure.

“*Que me voulez-vous, Monsieur?*” she ejaculated; then noting perhaps that I was not an evil-looking ruffian, she added, “*Je ne vous connais pas.*”

But that in itself was sufficient; it only remained with me to start a conversation. In the distance I could see my friends at the café standing up, the better to watch developments. I had an inspiration which I flattered myself afterwards was a masterpiece.

“It's this way, Mademoiselle,” I said; “I am an artist and I am looking for a specially beautiful face for a picture I am going to paint, and as you passed I said to myself that if I could only persuade you to sit for me my fortune is made. So you can help me if you will; anyhow I offer you my apologies for venturing to accost you.”

It was bold introduction, but it caught on. Although she repeated, “*Mais je ne vous connais pas, Monsieur,*” I could see she was not really angry, now she knew my reason for stopping her; so one portion of the bet was already won—now for the other. But in these few minutes I had realized that she was no ordinary girl, such as one could meet any day in Montmartre; so I quickly made up my mind that if I could help it the adventure should not end so abruptly. The ice was now broken, so after some persuasion I got her to let me accompany her just a little way while I told her all about my picture—which needless to say had only just been evolved from my imagination.

I soon discovered, and to my surprise, while getting more and more friendly, for I had hoped for something different, that she was quite a respectable girl, living with her people in the Rue Lepic, and was employed as vendeuse at a big millinery establishment in the Rue Roy-ale. We strolled on for quite a long while getting more and more friendly, till she gradually threw off her reserve of manner and re-marked naively that anyone to see us would take us for old friends; and then I remembered the bet and felt almost ashamed of myself for having told her such a lot of fibs. When, how-ever, she said she must be getting home, and I then suggested her dining with me instead, she wouldn't hear of it for a moment. "*Une autre fois, peut-etre, mais pas ce soir,*" besides, she was expected home. After a deal of persuasion I managed to get her to give me an address where I could write her, and she promised to meet me another evening; then she hurried away.

When I got back to the café my friends had nearly finished dinner; they gave a roar of laughter when I appeared alone, and the one who had made the bet began to chaff me mildly. I pulled out a five-franc piece and handed it to him, saying, "You have won that part of the bet, old man, but I'll have the bottle of wine with you, at any rate." They started asking a lot of questions, but I refused to be drawn.

"Comme il est malin, ce vieux Price," they declared.

I wondered if they guessed the luck the bet had brought me. A few days later we met again, but not by accident this time, and I took her to a very quiet restaurant away from my artistic haunts; and we sat right in a corner in case

anyone should happen to come in who knew her at home, and we had a simple little dinner which she chose herself—and then I told her all about the bet and she wasn't the least bit angry, but laughed heartily and said, “On m'a toujours dit que les Anglais sont monotones, mais vous no l'etes pas au moins.” Then we strolled back through quiet streets in quite spoony fashion, and I snatched an occasional kiss in dark doorways; and it was very nice and all that—but it wasn't a bit what I had expected, for she had to get in early unless she was going to a theatre, she told me. One evening, “when her parents knew me,” she would perhaps be allowed to stay out later. We had a very peaceful, pleasant evening, and I promised to write and fix another appointment; but on thinking it all over afterwards I came to the conclusion that it would be better for us both not to meet again — so I didn't write.

Next door to the Rat Mort on the Place Pigalle an artist's house, I think it was Stevens, with studio and garden, had just been bought by some enterprising restauranteur who had conceived the original idea of turning it all into a high-class restaurant; so one lunched or dined in the salle à manger and the salon and the big studio upstairs, while during the summer it was pleasant to take one's coffee under the tree in the garden which overlooked the Place. To this new place was given the artistic and resounding appellation of the Abbaye de Théléme. The prices were just a trifle higher than elsewhere in the neighborhood, but very moderate considering.

Montmartre in those days was a very different place to what it later became. The Moulin Rouge was not dreamed of. The chief place of amusement was the Elysée Montmartre, a dancing hall on the Boulevard Rochechouart, where

all the smartest and fastest girls and the artists' models were to be found. Everybody used to go there, and it was quite the only thing to do on Saturday and Sunday nights during the winter. One was pretty sure to find an "aventure" there also if one was looking for one. On Sundays, in the afternoon, there was dancing up at the Moulin de la Galette, a quaint ramshackle old place on the heights of Montmartre.

This was a picturesque spot close to the fortifications, on the top of a steep hill. It was almost rural in its seclusion, and was more like a corner in a small provincial town than a portion of busy Paris; the view one obtained from the terrace alone was worth the arduous climb up the ill-paved streets to reach it, and many people went up only for this, and with no intention of dancing. The ballroom was very primitive, as it had evidently been a big barn originally, and there was no pretence at all at luxury about it or the gardens surrounding it. Close by was the battered ruin of an old mill, from which it got its name. Here the crowd was of a very rough description; though one often met artists up there, it was not at all artistic. One was charged a small sum for each dance, and a man used to collect this during the dances. There were always a lot of pretty girls there, but it was a somewhat risky thing to ask anyone you didn't know to dance with you, as it was more than probable her "macquereau" was close by, and he and his pals might set on you when you got outside. This was constantly happening, as there was never more than one policeman on duty in the hall. Artists would go up there to look for a pretty model, and have a very bad time if they went up alone and were too venturesome.

Although it was the artists' quarter it was also a hot-bed of vice. The whole of the district round where I lived was full of women and their *souteneurs*, and in the Rue Breda on a warm summer evening one would see dozens of them hanging out of their windows in the scantiest of attire, and they would often beckon one to come up. There was, however, no necessity to go out of one's way to look up at the windows for such adventures if one were so minded, as the streets of the *Quartier de Notre Dame de Lorette* fairly reeked with cocottes, and they were to be seen everywhere—gorgeously dressed in the latest of fashion and painted up to their eyes. There were any number of brasseries and cafés which were crowded with them of a night—where one saw every possible grade of frail sisterhood.

I shall never forget my first impressions of one of these places. It was close on daybreak. In the hot, fetid atmosphere, reeking with musk and the fumes of stale tobacco smoke, the crowd of wanton women with their painted and powdered faces and tawdry finery appeared almost inhuman. I remember that on looking round I wondered what attraction, sensually or otherwise, these bedizened trollops could possibly present, even to the most drunken debauchee, for most of them were quite middle aged, and I did not see one with any pretension to good-looks. There were very few men in the cafe, and the women sat at the tables in gloomy silence, for time was getting on and soon the place would be closing, and then naught would remain but to make their way wearily to the all-night houses near the *Halles Centrales*, the last hope of the Paris street-walker. It was indeed a picture of the under-world of a great city. There were also not a few places in the neighborhood which enjoyed a peculiar notoriety distinctly Parisian, where the sterner sex were

seldom to be seen. In fact so notorious was the district that I often wondered if any respectable female really lived in it. The artists' colony adjourned, and in places overlapped it — whether by accident or design one can only surmise; anyhow, one would find studios in all the streets around the Place Pigalle—while along the Boulevard there seemed to be one in every house, judging from the immense windows facing north; in fact some houses consisted only of studios. The frame-makers and color merchants apparently thrived well in this quarter, for there were numbers of them. Artists' models, mostly Italians, male and female, used to loiter about the centre of the Place Pigalle waiting for a job—and with their picturesque costumes imparted a bright welcome note of color on a sunny morning.

The studio district later crept right up the heights of Montmartre—but I am only concerned with the part where I lived at that time, and which was the original colony — the Boulevard Rochechouart, the Boulevard de Clichy, and some of the neighboring streets.

No description of the quarter would be complete without some mention of the famous *Cabaret du Chat Noir* which had just been opened in the *Rue de Laval* by the artist, poet, and writer, Rodolphe Salis. Originally started on the Boulevard Rochechouart in 1881, in a modest shop which served as studio for Salis, it became the rendezvous of all the eccentric artists, poets, musicians, and writers of Montmartre, who gave full vent to the most revolutionary theories in their work, while ostensibly drinking the comparatively harmless beer of France. These reunions gradually became talked about and other people outside the little set were attracted to the place.

The growing éclat of the coterie decided Salis to transform his studio into an artistic cabaret. The walls were plentifully adorned with old tapestry and other quaint decorations and paintings, as well as with busts of the original members. A magnificent black cat, which had served as model to several artists, was the *ori flamme* of the little establishment which henceforth blazoned out under the sonorous appellation of “*L’Institut*” (a skit on the famous temple of Science and Art of Paris), and where only those who made their living by their intellect were eligible as members. The vogue of the place spread among the artists and writers away from Montmartre, and it became generally known as the “Chat Noir.” The artistic soirées of Salis began to be talked about; the tickets of invitation to these gatherings were eagerly sought after, till at length the modest ci-devant shop became too small to contain all those who wished to be present.

In the face of such extraordinary success, Salis decided to move the “Institut” to more important and convenient premises in the Rue de Laval in 1885. The removal of the cabaret from its old quarters was made in the most original and fantastic style—as might have been expected from so many fertile brains. At eleven at night a remarkable and picturesque procession was formed, and to the accompaniment of weird music the members marched through the streets with their bag and baggage to their “new home;” while the most curious spectacle that had ever been offered to Montmartre. The festivity in connection with the removal of the “Chat Noir” continued late in the night, and some of the younger and more boisterous of the followers of Salis were so carried away by the exuberance of their spirits that they started playing

pranks outside the cabaret, which might have landed them in trouble. As it was, they only escaped through a fortuitous circumstance which was quite amusing in itself.

About two in the morning half a dozen or so of young fellows, my cousin Jephson among them, after all sorts of hare-brained escapades, started scaling lamp-posts and turning out the gas. They were thus merrily engaged when some *sergeants de ville* suddenly appeared on the scene, arrested them all, and conveyed them to the nearest poste de police, where they were brought before the officer on a charge of riotous behaviour. Though doubtless accustomed to such boyish pranks on the part of artists and students, he assumed a very grave air, expatiated on the heinousness of their conduct, and told them to their astonishment that they would have to prove their identity; also that unless they could find bail he would not let them out till they had seen the Commissaire the following day.

Here was a pretty ending to a night's amusement; but there was no help for it, since he refused to regard it all as a harmless joke, so they began producing letters and cards to prove their respectability. Jephson alone had neither a card nor a letter on him—but in searching his pockets he came across a “spoof” letter that a facetious London friend had posted in his rooms in the Rue St. Georges that day. It was addressed thus: “To the Right Honourable Lord Sir Charles Jepson, Esquire, N. B. R. S. V. P., etc., dans son Hotel de St. Georges—a Paris.”

In a spirit of banter he handed the envelope to the official, who read it attentively. The effect produced was astounding; he rose from his chair and with an obsequious bow assured Jephson that he would accept his assurance that he and all his friends would attend before the Commissaire when ordered to do so—or words to that effect. So they all trooped out of the station again, and curiously enough they heard no more of the affair; which perhaps proved that even in a Republican country like France a high-sounding title carried weight.

The success of the “*Chat Noir*” brought about extraordinary changes, not only in the life of Montmartre but in the world of entertainment generally. Shortly there were imitation “*Chat Noirs*” all over the district, and then the rage extended to the Grande Boulevards and beyond. Still others followed—in all of which the original conception of Salis could be treated—namely, to give scope to eccentric genius and original thought—with the result that a new school of decoration sprang up, which gradually ousted timeworn academic methods, and which even now holds its own.

Pictorial: What Are You Looking At?



What are you looking at?

Niccolo Machiavelli by Sir Bertrand Russell

The Renaissance, though it produced no important theoretical philosopher, produced one man of supreme eminence in political philosophy, Niccolo Machiavelli. It is the custom to be shocked by him, and he certainly is sometimes shocking. But many other men would be equally so if they were equally free from humbug. His political philosophy is scientific and empirical, based upon his own experience of affairs, concerned to set forth the means to assigned ends, regardless of the question whether the ends are to be considered good or bad. When, on occasion, he allows himself to mention the ends that he desires, they are such as we can all applaud. Much of the conventional obloquy that attaches to his name is due to the indignation of hypocrites who hate the frank avowal of evil-doing. There remains, it is true, a good deal that genuinely demands criticism, but in this he is an expression of his age. Such intellectual honesty about political dishonesty would have been hardly possible at any other time or in any other country, except perhaps in Greece among men who owed their theoretical education to the sophists and their practical training to the wars of petty states which, in classical Greece as in Renaissance Italy, were the political accompaniment of individual genius.

Machiavelli (1467-1527) was a Florentine, whose father, a lawyer, was neither rich nor poor. When he was in his twenties, Savonarola dominated Florence; his miserable end evidently made a great impression on Machiavelli, for he remarks that "all armed prophets have conquered and unarmed ones failed," proceeding to give Savonarola as an instance of the

latter class. On the other side he mentions Moses, Cyrus, Theseus, and Romulus. It is typical of the Renaissance that Christ is not mentioned.

Immediately after Savonarola's execution. Machiavelli obtained a minor post in the Florentine government (1498). He remained in its service, at times on important diplomatic missions, until the restoration of the Medici in 1512; then, having always opposed them, he was arrested, but acquitted, and allowed to live in retirement in the country near Florence. He became an author for want of other occupation. His most famous work, *The Prince*, was written in 1513, and dedicated to Lorenzo the Magnificent, since he hoped (vainly, as it proved) to win the favour of the Medici. Its tone is perhaps partly due to this practical purpose; his longer work, the *Discourses*, which he was writing at the same time, is markedly more republican and more liberal. He says at the beginning of *The Prince* that he will not speak of republics in this book, since he has dealt with them elsewhere. Those who do not read also the *Discourses* are likely to get a very one-sided view of his doctrine.

Having failed to conciliate the Medici, Machiavelli was compelled to go on writing. He lived in retirement until the year of his death, which was that of the sack of Rome by the troops of Charles V. This year may be reckoned also that in which the Italian Renaissance died.

The Prince is concerned to discover, from history and from contemporary events, how principalities are won, how they are held, and how they are lost. Fifteenth-century Italy afforded a multitude of examples, both great and small. Few rulers were legitimate; even the popes, in many cases, secured election

by corrupt means. The rules for achieving success were not quite the same as they became when times grew more settled, for no one was shocked by cruelties and treacheries which would have disqualified a man in the eighteenth or the nineteenth century. Perhaps our age, again, can better appreciate Machiavelli, for some of the most notable successes of our time have been achieved by methods as base as any employed in Renaissance Italy. He would have applauded, as an artistic connoisseur in statecraft, Hitler's Reichstag fire, his purge of the party in 1934, and his breach of faith after Munich.

Caesar Borgia, son of Alexander VI, comes in for high praise. His problem was a difficult one: first, by the death of his brother, to become the sole beneficiary of his father's dynastic ambition; second, to conquer by force of arms, in the name of the Pope, territories which should, after Alexander's death, belong to himself and not to the Papal States; third, to manipulate the College of Cardinals so that the next Pope should be his friend. He pursued this difficult end with great skill; from his practice, Machiavelli says, a new prince should derive precepts. Caesar failed, it is true, but only "by the extraordinary malignity of fortune." It happened that, when his father died, he also was dangerously ill; by the time he recovered, his enemies had organized their forces, and his bitterest opponent had been elected Pope. On the day of this election, Caesar told Machiavelli that he had provided for everything, "except that he had never thought that at his father's death he would be dying himself."

Machiavelli, who was intimately acquainted with his villainies, sums up thus: "Reviewing thus all the actions of the duke [Caesar], I find nothing to blame, on the contrary, I feel bound, as I have done, to hold him as an example to be imitated by all who by fortune and with the arms of others have risen to power."

There is an interesting chapter "Of Ecclesiastical Principalities," which, in view of what is said in the *Discourses*, evidently conceals part of Machiavelli's thought. The reason for concealment was, no doubt, that *The Prince* was designed to please the Medici, and that, when it was written, a Medici had just become Pope (Leo X). In regard to ecclesiastical principalities, he says in *The Prince*, the only difficulty is to acquire them, for, when acquired, they are defended by ancient religious customs, which keep their princes in power no matter how they behave. Their princes do not need armies (so he says), because "they are upheld by higher causes, which the human mind cannot attain to." They are "exalted and maintained by God," and "it would be the work of a presumptuous and foolish man to discuss them." Nevertheless, he continues, it is permissible to inquire by what means Alexander VI so greatly increased the temporal power of the Pope.

The discussion of the papal powers in the *Discourses* is longer and more sincere. Here he begins by placing eminent men in an ethical hierarchy. The best, he says, are the founders of religions; then come the founders of monarchies or republics; then literary men. These are good, but destroyers of religions, subverters of republics or kingdoms, and enemies of virtue or of letters, are bad. Those who establish tyrannies are wicked, including Julius

Caesar; on the other hand, Brutus was good. (The contrast between this view and Dante's shows the effect of classical literature.) He holds that religion should have a prominent place in the State, not on the ground of its truth, but as a social cement: the Romans were right to pretend to believe in auguries, and to punish those who disregarded them. His criticisms of the Church in his day are two: that by its evil conduct it has undermined religious belief, and that the temporal power of the popes, with the policy that it inspires, prevents the unification of Italy. These criticisms are expressed with great vigour. "The nearer people are to the Church of Rome, which is the head of our religion, the less religious are they ... Her ruin and chastisement is near at hand ... We Italians owe to the Church of Rome and to her priests our having become irreligious and bad; but we owe her a still greater debt, and one that will be the cause of our ruin, namely that the Church has kept and still keeps our country divided."

In view of such passages, it must be supposed that Machiavelli's admiration of Caesar Borgia was only for his skill, not for his purposes. Admiration of skill, and of the actions that lead to fame, was very great at the time of the Renaissance. This kind of feeling has, of course, always existed; many of Napoleon's enemies enthusiastically admired him as a military strategist. But in the Italy of Machiavelli's time the quasi-artistic admiration of dexterity was much greater than in earlier or later centuries. It would be a mistake to try to reconcile it with the larger political aims which Machiavelli considered important; the two things, love of skill and patriotic desire for Italian unity, existed side by side in his mind, and were not in any degree synthesized. Thus he can praise Caesar Borgia for his cleverness, and blame him for keeping

Italy disrupted. The perfect character, one must suppose, would be, in his opinion, a man as clever and unscrupulous as Caesar Borgia where means are concerned, but aiming at a different end. The Prince ends with an eloquent appeal to the Medici to liberate Italy from the "barbarians" (i.e., the French and Spaniards), whose domination "stinks." He would not expect such a work to be undertaken from unselfish motives, but from love of power, and still more of fame.

The Prince is very explicit in repudiating received morality where the conduct of rulers is concerned. A ruler will perish if he is always good; he must be as cunning as a fox and as fierce as a lion. There is a chapter (XVIII) entitled: "In What Way Princes Must Keep Faith." We learn that they should keep faith when it pays to do so, but not otherwise. A prince must on occasion be faithless.

"But it is necessary to be able to disguise this character well, and to be a great feigner and dissembler; and men are so simple and so ready to obey present necessities, that one who deceives will always find those who allow themselves to be deceived. I will mention only one modern instance. Alexander VI did nothing else but deceive men, he thought of nothing else, and found the occasion for it; no man was ever more able to give assurances, or affirmed things with stronger oaths, and no man observed them less; however, he always succeeded in his deceptions, as he knew well this aspect of things. It is not necessary therefore for a prince to have all the abovenamed qualities [the conventional virtues], but it is very necessary to seem to have them."

He goes on to say that, above all, a prince should seem to be religious.

The tone of the Discourses, which are nominally a commentary on Livy, is very different. There are whole chapters which seem almost as if they had been written by Montesquieu; most of the book could have been read with approval by an eighteenth-century liberal. The doctrine of checks and balances is set forth explicitly. Princes, nobles, and people should all have a part in the Constitution; "then these three powers will keep each other reciprocally in check." The constitution of Sparta, as established by Lycurgus, was the best, because it embodied the most perfect balance; that of Solon was too democratic, and therefore led to the tyranny of Peisistratus, The Roman republican constitution was good, owing to the conflict of Senate and people.

The word "liberty" is used throughout as denoting something precious, though what it denotes is not very clear. This, of course, comes from antiquity, and was passed on to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Tuscany has preserved its liberties, because it contains no castles or gentlemen. ("Gentlemen" is of course a mistranslation, but a pleasing one.) It seems to be recognized that political liberty requires a certain kind of personal virtue in the citizens. In Germany alone, we are told, probity and religion are still common and therefore in Germany there are many republics. In general, the people are wiser and more constant than princes, although Livy and most other writers maintain the opposite. It is not without good reason that it is said, "The voice of the people is the voice of God."

It is interesting to observe how the political thought of the Greeks and Romans, in their republican days, acquired an actuality in the fifteenth century which it had not had in Greece since Alexander or in Rome since Augustus. The Neoplatonists, the Arabs, and the Schoolmen took a passionate interest in the metaphysics of Plato and Aristotle, but none at all in their political writings, because the political systems of the age of City States had completely disappeared. The growth of City States in Italy synchronized with the revival of learning, and made it possible for humanists to profit by the political theories of republican Greeks and Romans. The love of "liberty," and the theory of checks and balances, came to the Renaissance from antiquity, and to modern times largely from the Renaissance, though also directly from antiquity. This aspect of Machiavelli is at least as important as the more famous "immoral" doctrines of *The Prince*.

It is to be noted that Machiavelli never bases any political argument on Christian or biblical grounds. Medieval writers had a conception of "legitimate" power, which was that of the Pope and the Emperor, or derived from them. Northern writers, even so late as Locke, argue as to what happened in the Garden of Eden, and think that they can thence derive proofs that certain kinds of power are "legitimate." In Machiavelli there is no such conception. Power is for those who have the skill to seize it in a free competition. His preference for popular government is not derived from any idea of "rights," but from the observation that popular governments are less cruel, unscrupulous, and inconstant than tyrannies.

Let us try to make a synthesis (which Machiavelli himself did not make) of the "moral" and "immoral" parts of his doctrine. In what follows, I am expressing not my own opinions, but opinions which are explicitly or implicitly his.

There are certain political goods, of which three are specially important: national independence, security, and a well-ordered constitution. The best constitution is one which apportions legal rights among prince, nobles, and people in proportion to their real power, for under such a constitution successful revolutions are difficult and therefore stability is possible; but for considerations of stability, it would be wise to give more power to the people. So far as regards ends.

But there is also, in politics, the question of means. It is futile to pursue a political purpose by methods that are bound to fail; if the end is held good, we must choose means adequate to its achievement. The question of means can be treated in a purely scientific manner, without regard to the goodness or badness of the ends. "Success" means the achievement of your purpose, whatever it may be. If there is a science of success, it can be studied just as well in the successes of the wicked as in those of the good--indeed better, since the examples of successful sinners are more numerous than those of successful saints. But the science, once established, will be just as useful to the saint as to the sinner. For the saint, if he concerns himself with politics, must wish, just as the sinner does, to achieve success.

The question is ultimately one of power. To achieve a political end, power, of one kind or another, is necessary. This plain fact is concealed by slogans, such as "right will prevail" or "the triumph of evil is short-lived." If the side that you think right prevails, that is because it has superior power. It is true that power, often, depends upon opinion, and opinion upon propaganda; it is true, also, that it is an advantage in propaganda to seem more virtuous than your adversary, and that one way of seeming virtuous is to be virtuous. For this reason, it may sometimes happen that victory goes to the side which has the most of what the general public considers to be virtue. We must concede to Machiavelli that this was an important element in the growing power of the Church during the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries, as well as in the success of the Reformation in the sixteenth century. But there are important limitations. In the first place, those who have seized power can, by controlling propaganda, cause their party to appear virtuous; no one, for example, could mention the sins of Alexander VI in a New York or Boston public school. In the second place, there are chaotic periods during which obvious knavery frequently succeeds; the period of Machiavelli was one of them. In such times, there tends to be a rapidly growing cynicism, which makes men forgive anything provided it pays. Even in such times, as Machiavelli himself says, it is desirable to present an appearance of virtue before the ignorant public.

This question can be carried a step further. Machiavelli is of opinion that civilized men are almost certain to be unscrupulous egoists. If a man wished nowadays to establish a republic, he says, he would find corrupted. If a man is an unscrupulous egoist, his wisest line of conduct will depend upon the population with which he has to operate. The Renaissance Church shocked

everybody, but it was only north of the Alps that it shocked people enough to produce the Reformation. At the time when Luther began his revolt, the revenue of the papacy was probably larger than it would have been if Alexander VI and Julius II had been more virtuous, and if this is true, it is so because of the cynicism of Renaissance Italy. It follows that politicians will behave better when they depend upon a virtuous population than when they depend upon one which is indifferent to moral considerations; they will also behave better in a community in which their crimes, if any, can be made widely known, than in one in which there is a strict censorship under their control. A certain amount can, of course, always be achieved by hypocrisy, but the amount can be much diminished by suitable institutions.

Machiavelli's political thinking, like that of most of the ancients, is in one respect somewhat shallow. He is occupied with great law givers, such as Lycurgus and Solon, who are supposed to create a community all in one piece, with little regard to what has gone before. The conception of a community as an organic growth, which the statesmen can only affect to a limited extent, is in the main modern, and has been greatly strengthened by the theory of evolution. This conception is not to be found in Machiavelli any more than in Plato.

It might, however, be maintained that the evolutionary view of society, though true in the past, is no longer applicable, but must, for the present and the future, be replaced by a much more mechanistic view. In Russia and Germany new societies have been created, in much the same way as the mythical Lycurgus was supposed to have created the Spartan polity. The ancient law

giver was a benevolent myth; the modern law giver is a terrifying reality. The world has become more like that of Machiavelli than it was, and the modern man who hopes to refute his philosophy must think more deeply than seemed necessary in the nineteenth century.

The Ring by Anais Nin

In Peru it is the custom among the Indians to exchange rings for a betrothal, rings that have been in their possession for a long time. These rings are sometimes in the shape of a chain.

A very handsome Indian fell in love with a Peruvian woman of Spanish descent, but there was violent opposition on the part of her family. The Indians were purported to be lazy and degenerate, and to produce weak and unstable children, particularly when married to Spanish blood.

In spite of the opposition, the young people carried out their engagement ceremony among their friends. The girl's father came in during the festivities and threatened that, if he ever met the Indian wearing the chain ring the girl had already given him, he would tear it from his anger in the bloodiest manner, and if necessary cut his finger off. The festivities were spoiled by this incident. Everybody went home, and the young people separated with promises to meet secretly.

They met one evening after many difficulties, and kissed fervently for a long while. The woman was exalted by his kisses. She was ready to give herself, feeling that this might be their last moment together, for her father's anger was growing every day. But the Indian was determined to marry her, determined not to possess her in secrecy. Then she noticed that he did not have the ring on his finger. Her eyes questioned him. He said in her ear, 'I am wearing it, but not where it can be seen. I am wearing it where no one can see

it, but where it will prevent me from taking you or any other woman until we are married.'

'I don't understand,' said the woman. 'Where is the ring?'

Then he took her hand, led it to a certain place between the legs. The woman's fingers felt his penis first of all, and then he guided her fingers and she felt the ring there at the base of it. At the touch of her hand, however, the penis hardened and he cried out, because the ring pressed into it and gave him excruciating pain.

The woman almost fainted with horror. It was as if he wanted to kill and mutilate the desire in himself. And at the same time the thought of this penis bound and encircled by her ring roused her sexually, so that her body became warm and sensitive to all kinds of erotic fantasies. She continued to kiss him, and he begged her not to, because it brought him greater and greater pain.

A few days later the Indian was again in agony, but he could not get the ring off. The doctor had to be called, and the ring filed away.

The woman came to him and offered to run away with him. He accepted. They got on horses and traveled for a whole night together to a nearby town. There he concealed her in a room and went out to get work on an hacienda. She did not leave the room until her father tired of searching for her. The night watchman of the town was the only one aware of her presence. The watchman was a young man and had helped to conceal her. From her window she could

see him walking back and forth carrying the keys of the houses, and calling,
‘The night is clear and all is well in the town.’

When someone came home late he would clap his hands together and call for the watchman. The watchman would open the door. While the Indian was away at work the watchman and the woman chatted together innocently.

He told her about a crime that had recently taken place in the village. The Indians who left the mountain and their work on the haciendas and went down to the jungle became wild and beastlike. Their faces changed from lean, noble contours to bestial grossness.

Such a transformation had just taken place in an Indian who had once been the handsomest man of the village, gracious, silent, with a strange humor and a reserved sensuality. He had gone down to the jungle and made money hunting. Now he had returned. He was homesick. He came back poor and wandered about homeless. No one recognized or remembered him.

Then he had caught a little girl on the road and ripped her sexual parts with a long knife used for skinning animals. He had not violated her, but had taken the knife and inserted it into her sex, and belabored her with it. The whole village was in a turmoil. They could not decide how to punish him. A very old Indian practice was to be revived for his sake. His wounds would be parted and wax, mixed with a biting acid the Indians knew of, inserted into them so that the pain would be doubled. Then he was to be flogged to death.

As the watchman told this story to the woman, her lover returned from his work. He saw her leaning out of the window and looking at the watchman. He rushed up to her room and appeared before her with his black hair wild around his face, his eyes full of lightning bolts of anger and jealousy. He began to curse her and torture her with questions and doubts.

Ever since the accident with the ring his penis had remained sensitive. The lovemaking was accompanied with pain, and so he could not indulge in it as often as he wanted. His penis would swell and hurt him for days. He was always afraid he was not satisfying his mistress and that she might love another. When he saw the tall watchman talking to her, he was sure they were carrying on an affair behind his back. He wanted to hurt her, he wanted her to suffer bodily in some way, as he had suffered for her. He forced her to go downstairs with him to the cellar where the wines were kept in vats under beamed ceilings.

He tied a rope to one of the beams. The woman thought he was going to beat her. She could not understand why he was preparing a pulley. Then he tied her hands and began pulling on the rope so that her body was raised in the air and the whole weight of it hung on her wrists, and the pain was great.

She wept and swore that she had been faithful, but he was insane. When she fainted as he pulled the rope again, he came to his senses. He took her down and began embracing her and caressing her. She opened her eyes and smiled at him.

He was overcome with desire for her and he threw himself on her. He thought that she would resist him, that after the pain she had endured she would be angry. But she made no resistance. She continued to smile at him. And when he touched her sex he found that she was wet. He took her with fury, and she responded with the same exaltation. It was the best night they ever had together, lying there on the cold cellar floor in the darkness.

Pictorial: *Something Very Alone and Very Insignificant*



The Philosopher who Philosophizes by Henry Miller

As a species the philosophers have always bored me to death. The profession has always seemed to me to be an unnatural one, an activity removed from life. (This is a criticism which does not come to my head, for example, when thinking of a Hindu or a Tibetan sage.) At the same time philosophy itself excites me, much as good wine does: I accept it not only as a legitimate part of life but as a *sine qua non*, a without which no life. Nothing, however, is sadder, more dismal, dingy, mingy, picayune than the lives of certain philosophers. It is as if they had become, or rebecome, queasy, quaky, archaic little men whose whole lives are mortgaged by the obsession for constructing miniature soul-houses to be occupied only after death. The man can be one thing, a tiny louse, let us say, and the philosophy another, perhaps a crushing, devastating world conception which nobody can swallow, not even the philosopher himself. The process of refining and segregating Idea, of making it "pure," so to speak, inevitably brings about a muddiness which is fortunately lacking in the original chaos. I have a mental image of the philosophic systems of the world lying like a net above the surface of human activity; from his remote and lofty perch the philosopher looks down through the curd-like net and discovers in the affairs of men nothing but dreck.

All this is not by way of saying that Keyserling is the first philosopher whom I can stomach. No, there are times when Keyserling too bores me to death. But with Keyserling there comes a new element, an heroic and adulterative one which, like the discovery of the microbe world in the human organism, stimulates and complicates the problem of health and clarity. Keyserling is

the first philosopher to use a sky-light—or a periscope. He may plunge as deep as the whale but he never forgets the sky above, nor the fact that it is the sky towards which men are turning instinctively for relief and assuagement. Keyserling comes at a time when both sea and sky are being heavily explored. He is the new type of spiritual adventurer, the Plutonic heralder who faces both ways, who is at home above and below, who reconciles East and West and yet never loses hold of the tiller. Built like a Viking, with an unquenchable fire in his guts and a pantheon for a brain, he has dedicated his life to quest and conquest. For me he represents the genuine metamorphic thinker, one capable of navigating in any medium. He is endowed with an indestructible skeletal structure and a crystalline transparency usually observable only in lower forms of life.

I first came upon Keyserling's vast symphonic musings at a fortuitous moment in my life. For forty years I had been sound asleep and thrashing about with furious activity. Life had become nothing but this noisy breathing which signifies nothing. Through a rencontre with an extraordinary person I suddenly awoke, looked about, and saw what I had never seen before—the cosmos. And then, right to hand, was one of Keyserling's books — *Creative Understanding* — which I devoured ravenously. It was like the first mouthful of bread after a long fast; even the hard, tough crust tasted good. I allowed this food to roll about in my guts a long while before venturing to taste another morsel. The next time I picked up Keyserling, I remember, was during a sea voyage. This time it was *The Travel Diary*. I did not begin at the beginning, but glanced here and there at the chapters dealing with those countries which most interest me — China and India. I saw the philosopher in his undershirt,

a frail weatherbeaten man, puzzled, ravished, perplexed, roving amidst a fauna and flora which were constantly changing and shifting; I saw that he was most extraordinarily fallible, permeable, malleable. I rejoiced for him, and even enjoyed his occasional discomfiture.

Another time, in bed, I began the great South American saga of the soul. I was privileged to experience that indescribable pleasure of being electrified in the midst of a heavy torpor. The whole cosmos suddenly began to wheel before me. I felt the blood which the earth has given to man restored to earth to run in tumultuous subterranean rivers, to flow sluggishly among the constellations, to burst the trunks of fat tropical trees, to dry and bake in the peaked Andes, to slumber in the land-and-water beasts, the shell-backed monsters, the hypnotic and fatalistic ophidians: I saw a man take a continent by the scalp and wash it in the sea, shaking loose its hair-like dreams and silences, laying its blood out in thick slabs and dissecting it, selecting with a most dexterous digital manipulation its fragile, doomed inhabitants one by one, group by group, race by race, generation by generation, the whole multimillenary ancestral horde living and dead, ghastly and ghostly, full-blown, fly-blown, scoriated, striated, truncated, pulped, battered, a rich plasma of dead and living, of souls, ghosts, mummies, spirits, noumena, phenomena, succubi, incubi, and plough them through with the iron harrow of thought's brutal logic; then taking gold and dross together, with the goldsmith's finest balance, weigh, assay, test and attest, in order, like a dreaming Titan, to set moving in the sleep of thought a timeward litter of words which would arrange itself in the form of a significant whole. This I glimpsed whilst felling asleep one night, and it was a special dress rehearsal

put on for me by the same gaunt Viking in swallow-tail coat who prefers champagne with his evening meal, who gesticulates like a god of thunder, who strokes his beard meditatively and sits alone sometimes, oft times, to reflect, meditate and pray, or to gather back into him the vast sperm and spew which he is capable of ejecting on the slightest provocation.

Such an experience is definitely not in the philosophic scheme of things. I had to recast my notion of “philosopher.” I had to take the situation philosophically. I had to admit, above all, that for the first time in my life I was witnessing a philosopher lose himself in the world—not only lose himself, but drown himself, and not only drown, but immolate himself: had to confess that more miraculous still was the sight of him rising from the grave with the stake through his body, the sight of him defiantly flinging it off—stake, world, water, waves, heavy ether, soporific excrescences, end dreams, blood vistas, horoscopic hallucinations, dead thought clinkers, social pus habits, all, all, the while making an airy music above in the pink clouds drenching the mountain top. Nor was I any longer surprised when I heard him blow the conch and roll the kettle drum, nor when whooping it up along the Appalachian spine he suddenly burst into the Rig-Veda.

This is what I call philosophizing. It is something other than making philosophy—something plus. Here the creative becomes the thing-in-itself, and not vice versa: the exercise of a faculty and not the product of the exercise. Living the every-day life whilst spinning the most tenuous tough web. Not the soul-house of incarceration but the light-meshed web of the divine diaphane. In this transparent garb studded with dead flies, dead thought matter, dead

meteoric systems, dead mouse-traps, dead passkeys, we advance page after page, foot by foot, millimeter by millimeter, through the Keyserling underworld sea. At times we are lifted clean out of the waters and rushed aloft like a screaming condor. The world systems pass in review, those already formulated and those not yet formulated. With myriad-minded mythological eye we pierce the stale imperfections that cement life to life and death to death. We become habituated to all climates, all conditions of weather, all forms of blight, pestilence, sorrow and suffering; we peregrinate in non-peripatetic style, eschewing the perimeter, the axes, the hypotenuse, avoiding angles, squares, triangles: instead we adopt the lymphatic slide, follow the interstitial, interstellar parabolas. In the deep-holed world conceptions scattered between star births and star deaths we shimmer with spangled webs, radiant, dewy, misty, effulgent with philosophic dust. Where now the god who was nailed to the cross? Where the man with the lantern? Where the ferryman, the fire-eater, the logos dealer, the lotus healer, the Gorgon, the flat-footed Moloch? What has become of man, mollusc of molluscs?

Keyserling's style . . . there is something prehistoric about it. Of a morning he awakes in a volcanic mood, and he erupts. What is terrifying and unbearable, in his style, is not the heavy Baltic or Pomeranian redundancy, but the inundating effect. We are enlightened, blessed, baptized and drowned. There is every variety of inundation—by air, fire, earth and water, by lava, slag, cinders, by relics, monuments, symbols, signs and portents. The very secrets of the earth are belched forth and with them the scintillating pre-diluvial records of man. Throughout the convulsive record there are pages of oceanic calm in which one can hear the breathing of whales and other leviathans of

the deep; there are celestial sunrises too, as on the morning of creation when even the fledgling lark can be heard caroling in the blue. And there are great frozen tracts in which the air itself turns blue as a knuckle and the marrow of wisdom is held in icy suspense.

Keyserling is a sort of red-feathered giant from the tundras, a megalithic Mameluke of the Lemurian Age who has created his own polyphonetic, polyphylacteric alphabet. His language is something forged by hand out of meteoric rock; there is no sensuality, no humor in it. It contains the seeds of all that was dreamed of by man in the cataclysmic beginnings of the world: it is not a blood language but a schist-cyst-and-quartz medium. And yet, like all those of royal strain, he is capable of showing tenderness, humility, true humility. He will take the pains, in a letter, to answer a microscopic point, if the point is worth answering. He will begin on a post-card and end by presenting you with an album. With the superabundant energy of a colossus he will uncover a ton of debris in order to bring to light an infinitesimal speck of radium with which to illumine the question. He does not impose his verdict; he turns his searchlight on the problem. He is a visionary of heavy substance, a seer who looks into the bowels of the earth as well as into the blue. He is equipped with the most sensitive antennae and the boring tusk of a rhinoceros to boot.

The ordinary reader is killed off—not by the back-breaking *longueurs* à la Proust or Henry James, nor by the learned abracadabra of a Joyce, but by the unaccustomed variety of media through which the muscular flow of thought cleaves and surges. People have accused him of being derivative, assimilative,

synthetic. The truth is that he is analgesic and amalgamatic. As the thought flows it congeals, imprisoning in the most marvelous veined clots the hemorrhages produced by the terrifying lesions which his impetuous ardor opens up. He is a thinker who attacks with the whole body, who emerges at the end of a book bleeding from every pore. With Keyserling the spirit goes berserker. It is the rage of the giants who, weary of earthly conquests, flung themselves at the heavens. He makes a blood marriage with the spirit: Apis the Bull goring the Holy Ghost in ecstasy. Sometimes it seems more like God lying down on the operating table with his adopted son Hermann and exchanging vital fluids: a last minute operation in preparation for the final ordeal, the quest and conquest of death.

{essay written in Corfu on the occasion of Keyserling's 60th birthday, 1940}

Pictorial: Henry Miller by Brassai



Henry Miller, 1932

The Beautiful Spy Who Found High Adventure by Kurt Singer

Curious often, dramatic in contrast, are the ways of human nature seeking outlet, self-expression. A spirit like Napoleons undermines mountains, overflows barriers, and, forcing a channel, sweeps the edifices of an epoch like so much wreckage before a torrent. Another, Louise de Bettignies', like an aimless stream deflected by little hills, meanders this way or that, shallow and powerless. Suddenly, virtually by accident, it meets a mere rift in the earth; and rushing down its predestined channel the stream becomes powerful with rapids and waterfalls, straightens out its course and comes to dominate the land. It, too, has found its high adventure.

For the story of Louise dc Bettignies let us go back to August 1, 1914. The dreaded word "War!" is flashing round the world. Electric currents have set in motion the ponderous sensitive machinery of modern armies. The greatest of these, the most modern, the most highly organized are the armies of Imperial Germany; and, at the expected word, several of them—millions of mechanized men, giant artillery, air fleets, engineering corps, and battalions of secret service—sweep treaties and troops aside and, overwhelming Belgium, turn, flanking south, into France.

Before the ruthless tramp of these armies flees the panic-stricken civil population of Belgium and northern France, women and children in the main, pell-mell for the English Channel, and as many of them as can be crowded on board ship crops to England.

Those who land at Folkestone are shepherded into lines to wait while every man, woman, and child is examined by British military officials; first for identification; then for news of the enemy.

It is not with much hope that the officers question the refugees for military information. Panic-stricken civilians in flight do not make good observers of what is in back of them. The questioning at Folkestone, therefore, is hasty and perfunctory, especially as the pressure of new arrivals increases hourly.

Suddenly something holds up the line and the refugees wonder why; necks are craned, questions fly. But no information is forthcoming.

What has happened is that the examining officers have struck, not a snag, but a mine of riches in a young Frenchwoman whose turn has come to answer questions. She is petite and pretty; rich chestnut hair, shining, dominating brown eyes, an oval face, fair and delicate skin, full mobile lips, and a flashing smile. She is slightly built, but fine stock and an interest in athletics have given her body strength and grace.

The officer in charge seeing a Frenchwoman began his perfunctory questioning in French.

“Can you tell us anything about the Army of Occupation?”

She began in French, then in her eagerness to help him continued in English as flawless as his own. But what arrested him from the first was the quality

and quantity of what she had to say. A trained military observer could not have absorbed information more shrewdly than she did in flight. All a reporter's gifts were there—eyes, ears, intuition, judgment, knowledge, memory, the ability to pack much in a brief report.

Other officers crowded to listen. "Why, one would have to understand German perfectly to have gathered all this!" one of them exclaimed.

"I know German," she said.

"Who are you?"

She is Louise de Bettignies; born in northern France; her home is in Lille, now in the hands of the Germans; and she wants to get to St. Omer in France to join her mother. She is rich in ancestry and education, but poor in pocket. For fifteen years up to the outbreak of war she had been governess to rich and tided French and German families; once she refused service with the family of the heir to the throne of Austria-Hungary. Because she was an aristocrat herself her employers treated her as an equal; they took her on luxury trips all over Europe; she was invited to take a hand at bridge with princely guests. She is out of employment now.

The officers consult in whispers. She is told she is free to join her mother; but the British secret service would appreciate it if she consented to stay over a day or two 'for a consultation. She agrees; and the line of refugees moves forward again.

That evening she learns what the chiefs of the British secret service want her to do. It is to go back to Lille. There on the inside of the German occupation she is not only to act as a spy herself, but also to organize a network of espionage for the whole region about Lille. She is to institute a daily delivery of military information that should find its way somehow to Field-Marshal French in St. Omer, where her mother is, and to military intelligence chiefs at Folkestone. Is she willing to do all this ? they ask.

As she realizes what they are asking the colour goes out of her face. She knows how thoroughly a German army polices an occupied area; how highly organized is its service of counterespionage; and, of course, she knows what will happen to her if the Germans catch her as a spy.

Then gradually the colour in her face returns. After the first shock of the proposal her mind goes on to consider how she would execute the assignment. And as she ponders a glow deepens in her cheeks, her eyes, her whole being seems irradiated. It is as though for the first time something that had long been pent up in her were about to find expression.

She inherited the high courage of her Crusader ancestors; but a sheltered existence had not called upon her to exercise it. She is blessed with buoyant health, but has never had to tax it. She has a mind and character that could “forge the anchors and spin the gossamers” of thought and action; but what scope was there for them in the job of governess. Her spirit found delight in a

dress, but dreamed of rapture whether with Jove for a man or in martyrdom for a cause. She has not met her man. But here is the call of Cause!

“I’ll do!”

In St. Omer her mother caught her in her arms thanking God for a child rescued from the Germans. Then Louise had to tell her she was going back to Lille; and why. The poor woman almost swooned. But there was nothing she could do about it.

Louise then went to her confessor, Father Boulange, for advice. As a spy and the head of an organization of spies, the lives of others as well as her own would depend on what she did or did not do in this or that emergency. She would perhaps be called upon to lie, cheat, steal; if necessary to debase herself; perhaps — who could tell?—to kill. *“How far would the end justify the means,”* she asked the priest.

What he told her we shall never know. But next day she re- ported to the Chief of the British Army in France. He schooled her in the kind of information he wanted out of the Lille area. Then handing over to her a large sum of money to be used at her discretion he bade her Godspeed.

Back to Folkstone she crossed, and again crossed the English Channel to Vlissingen in Holland. From there she went to Philipine a village on the boundary line between Holland and Belgium.

For four years that boundary line' was perhaps the most amazing scene in this often insane world of ours. Here was a fence, extending the whole length of the Dutch-Belgian frontier. On one side of the fence was war, the most devastating war in the world's history. On the Belgian side of the fence a man trying to escape through it could be shot down like game in open season. But if he managed to dive through that fence he was in the land of peace and plenty and entitled to sanctuary even from the hunter whose hand could reach from the other side and hold him.

The Germans, of course, saw to it that this fence was kept efficient. It was of steel, barbed, high and so charged with electric current that there was little to choose between touching it and being shot dead.

Then at regular intervals powerful searchlights were set up which at night were more cruel to a fugitive than daylight.

Further, to discourage prowling on the Belgian side of the fence there were wires concealed in brush and undergrowth, in fields and in the woods. So cunningly hidden were the loops that they escaped notice even by daylight. But the poor devil whose foot caught in one of them was blown to bits by the mine he set off.

It is at night on the Dutch side of this zone that we see Louise waiting to make her first crossing into Belgium. She is wearing a black hat and a black cloak; and waiting for a guide. The British secret service chief has told her of one.

“His name is Alphonse Verstapen and he is a Belgian. He is a huge ruffianly looking chap and by profession a smuggler. But the German invasion seems to have brought about a sort of sea-change in him. He is keen to do his bit now and he certainly knows the Dutch-Belgian border. I think we can trust his patriotism. But I don’t know how far one can trust him alone with a pretty woman. So if you feel the least hesitation, we’ll arrange for another guide.”

It is this man who now, like a shadow, approaches Louise as she stands by the steel fence. He mutters a word of identification and Louise whispers the required password. The big fellow bends down to peer at her and she almost flinches before the towering presence and the reek of tobacco and brandy mingled. For some moments he scrutinizes her; then takes her hand. Without a word he leads her into a strip of dense wood. Whatever may be her thoughts, there is no tremor in the small hand the giant

Before a high steel barbed fence they stop and the giant kneels on the ground. With his hands he digs at die loam. Although he moves cautiously he makes such rapid progress that obviously the hole in the ground he uncovers had been previously prepared. He crawls into it and on hands and knees Louise follows. When they stand up again the steel fence is just at their backs.

Alphonse almost literally feels his way forward in the dark. And literally he has to know every inch of the ground to avoid the creeping vines of concealed wires. Louise steps on his very shadow.

Suddenly the night is slashed by the beam of a searchlight. Alphonse drops to the ground, so does Louise. They must show no shadow or spot of colour; so they lie face down and motionless while the icy white light glides through the dark like some rigid tentacle. They know that alongside of each questioning searchlight stands a sharpshooter.

Along that border shots in the night sound frequently and many a morning reveals what the riflemen have brought down. The terror inspired by that border was illustrated pitifully by what happened to a Belgian woman who set out one night with her year-old infant in her arms. Life in the occupied area had become so difficult that she thought she would try to escape into Holland. Only two miles lay between her and safety.

Several times the searchlights caught her, but as she at once dropped to the ground she escaped being seen by the men who stood behind the powerful arcs, fingers on triggers. Then dimly ahead of her she made out two other fugitives stealing across a field. She knew who they were, neighbors.

Suddenly under the two came a blinding flash and the roar of an explosion. The woman did not see what happened to the couple nor did she stop to look. She knew only too well. With her infant clutched fiercely to her breast she fled back to her home. When she got there she found that in her terror she had crushed the breath out of her child.

The shafts of light playing over Alphonse and Louise are joined by others. Are they discovered? But no shots ring out and after what must have seemed to the two endless waiting the searchlights move elsewhere.

Alphonse and Louise get to their feet and again move forward through the night.

When morning comes the steel fence, the land mines and the searchlights are miles behind them. But now almost at every cross- road they are challenged by German sentries. Passports, permission to travel, the purpose of their errand, and other information is demanded of them at each challenge. The sentries range in character from elderly veterans of former wars to keen-faced members of the Imperial counter-espionage service.

But the British have provided Louise and Alphonse with a wealth of skillfully concocted papers of identification. "Special Intelligence" in London had a passport factory as well equipped as the one at 70 Koniggratzer Strasse, Berlin. In a private dwelling in Rue d'Isly in Lille, Clothilde, a domestic, the only occupant at the time, heard in the middle of the night the doorbell ring. Accustomed as she was to visits by German patrols, she was nevertheless too frightened at first to open the door. Then she heard a ripple of laughter and a familiar voice:

"Clothilde, ouvre ... c'est moi!"

"Mon Dieu, c'est Mademoiselle Louise!"

Clothilde admitted her mistress and a huge bearded stranger. Alphonse hugely enjoyed the warm meal and the wine Clothilde managed to provide. But he declined Louise's invitation to stop and rest.

"I must be back at Mouscron by morning," he said.

Then he looked[^] curiously at the travel-grimed young woman who was urging him to take his rest there. A queer expression came into his bold bearded face as his eyes took in her lithe petite figure, her fair skin, and warm colour.

"And you were not once afraid the whole trip!" he said, puzzled and admiring.

"Oh, more than once!" she laughed. "They are terrible, these *Boches*! But I knew you would get me safely home!"

He went to the door and opened it. "I wasn't meaning the Boches!" he said, and left.

For an hour Louise luxuriated in a warm bath. Then, although she must have been nearly dead with fatigue, nothing would do her but to try on one pretty dress after another that she took out of her wardrobe. She was saying hello again to dear friends she had had to desert in haste when the Germans came.

Although she had not slept the night before, she told Clothilde to wake her early in the morning. Had the servant known why she would not have had the heart to obey.

Louise entered on her new duties the moment her eyes opened. For an hour she questioned Clothilde. Then she put on a suit of dark shabbily genteel material and a little brown felt toque. This was to be her working garb.

She had brought with her a rather large well-worn handbag of imitation leather. It was to figure largely in her adventures thereafter. Just then it contained among other things papers identifying her as "*Alice Dubois*," maker and seller of laces. And it was by this "war name" that she became known, and later famous.

After breakfast Alice went out for a survey. The face of the city was pockmarked with the minimum of fighting it cost the Germans to capture it. From afar on the breeze there came occasionally the rumble of artillery; but as the German advance swept on, Lille heard only the growl and snarling of a "dog fight" in the air when some bold Allied aviator ventured a visit.

Everywhere the measured tread of the iron heel of occupation. Sentries and patrols, patrols and sentries. And to her more dangerous still, because invisible, was the sensitive complicated network of counter-espionage she knew the Germans had laid throughout the occupied area, much more cunningly devised than the tangle of wires over the land mines at the Dutch border.

She would have to beware of some of her very neighbors, weak or crushed spirits enlisted by the conquerors. She would have beware of those who employed them, graduates of the best spy school in the world, men and women of high technique in spying and uncovering spies.

And the thought of all these complex dangers set Alice's heart pounding; not with fear, but with the excitement a chess master must feel when a game takes on a complicated beauty; an excitement that only keys up the mind to keener pitch.

Alice went about Lille and the surrounding country "selling lace." In reality, of course, she was weaving her own intricate design. In a little shop she met a short energetic young woman no taller than herself. Marie-Leonie Vanhoutte was of peasant stock turned to keeping shop, and between her and Alice all the deeplying traits of the French were embraced

They took to each other on sight. Without hesitation Alice asked Marie-Leonie to become her lieutenant, and the response was eager. Thereafter Marie-Leonie became "Charlotte," itinerant pedlar of cheeses.

In the town of Mouscron lived a chemist and his wife, the De Geyteris. Louise enlisted them too in her service, and their home became one of her many stopping places. In M. de Geyter's laboratory strange equipment appeared; cameras of various kinds and magnifying glasses; chemicals that became invisible inks, steel dies with blank surfaces to be engraved upon; a hand-press

parts could in a minute be assembled or scattered among various hiding places; materials for the repair of wireless outfits. The possession of any one of these things, if discovered by the Germans would send the owner far along the road to trouble.

A manufacturer, Louis Sion, and his son, Etienne, gave services and, until the Germans requisitioned them, their automobiles to Alice. In the town of Santes a map-maker, Paul Bernard, and his fine-pointed calligraphic pen were enlisted. In time, with the aid of magnifying glasses and a shorthand system, M. Bernard was able to crowd a 3,000-word report for Alice by means of his calligraphic pen in invisible ink on a bit of transparent paper which she could paste on one of the lenses of a pair of spectacles. With time still more places men and women in every walk of life placed their services, all their means, and their very lives at Alice's disposal.

And of these burghers and servants, shopkeepers and aristocrats, peasants and townspeople, artisans and labourers, of their possessions and their varied mentalities and spirits Alice wove that network of hers which must be finely co-ordinated, and yet be so detached, one part from the others, that should catastrophe overtake any one of her people or herself,' the rest would not be betrayed and could go on functioning.

One thing she took special care to impress upon her people:

"If tomorrow I or any one of you should be found out by the Germans and brought before any of our comrades for identification, your memory must stop

working. The unfortunate one, no matter who, is a stranger to you and must be left to his fate or hers. Pity, friendship, at such a time would only sign the death warrant for yourselves and others whose lives depend upon us. Remember!"

They remembered; it was only Alice who for a terrible moment would forget.

Then her organization began to function. For instance, there had been a major battle and it was important for the Allies to know how many men the Germans had lost. The trains of wounded would pass through Lille. The windows of a house that overlooked the railroad tracks were curtained by day and dark at night. They had to be, otherwise a German patrol would pay the house a visit or perhaps only send a bullet or two through the window that showed a face or a light.

But there was a small hole in one of the window blinds through which an eye could see the railroad track. When the long trains of wounded passed, with each car there sounded in the room the slight tap of a foot. It was barely loud enough to reach the next room where a school child sat apparently doing arithmetic. But at the sound of each tap from the window down went a little pencil stroke on paper. One-two-three-four—and a stroke across the four for the fifth tap.

When the last of these trains had passed the arithmetic lesson was over. So many hundred times five were cast up. The total number was multiplied by another, the average number of wounded men the Germans crowded into a

car. The gross total came to the number of wounded the Germans had sustained in that major battle.

A match reduced the arithmetic lesson to paper ash. And the student left the house murmuring a large number to herself over and over like some sort of inaudible prayer. The schoolgirl passed the number to someone she met in the street and on the instant proceeded to forget it. Finally the murmur reached the ears of Alice, who in turn told it to M. Bernard. He with his fine calligraphic pen put the number down in minute figures in the current report Alice was preparing.

Then she set out herself to deliver the report to her superior. Major Edward Cameron, across the Channel at Folkestone. This meant that Alice would have to make her way through occupied Belgium, through cordon after cordon of inspection; and through the zone of horror at the border with all the wealth of possibilities that lay in such a journey. She made such journeys back and forth sometimes as often as once a week. She could pardonably have assigned this perilous commuting to some subordinate. But she did not. And those many journeys make a sort of little modern Odyssey of adventures in peril and escape.

Sometimes she travelled alone, more often with some one of her lieutenants. The easier part of their plotting was to furnish satisfactory accounts of themselves as demanded by the scores of sentries and examining officers who held them up. For Alice had set up a passport factory of her own in the laboratory of M. de Geyter; and good-looking "cards of identity," "visas,"

"permissions to travel," "acknowledgments of registration," "passports," "certificates" were always available to Alice and her confederates.

The real hazards began when questions were followed by Teutonically thorough search of the clothing and the person. Then it was that to be found in possession of one of Alice's reports meant sure death. It was only toward the end that M. Bernard's fine pen performed such miracles of minuteness as when a 3,000-word report could be carried unobserved on a spectacle lens. Before such efficiency was reached a report took up a certain amount of space. And the delicate problem was how to dispose of it, about one's person beyond the ingenuity of the Germans to find it. For it must be always remembered that the Germans were no amateurs themselves at spies' tricks.

Alice had the joy one day of watching a German official stamp die Imperial eagle on the photograph that went with her new "*carte d'identité*." The photograph had a nice glossy surface. And the gloss was due to a film of translucent paper that had been pasted over it, on which with invisible ink M. Bernard had penned one of Alice's most ample reports.

But that, too, was in the later, more expert phase of her activity. Prior to that she and her lieutenants had more trouble hiding the sheets of Japanese rice paper on which so much depended. But also for Alice there had been more sport in the game. One night, for instance, she was swinging along the road, in her hand a lantern containing a burning candle. Just before she got to the house where she had to deliver her report a patrol surrounded her. She knew she would be taken to the guardhouse where she would be expertly searched

by a woman who was formerly a German police matron. For her squat figure she had been nick-named "*La Grenouille*" The Frog, by those who had reason to hate and fear her.

But all that Alice seemed to find in the situation was the waste of her candle. Thriftily she blew it out; then cheerfully submitted to the search. The Frog undressed her to the skin; but finding nothing 'incriminating on her, surlily permitted her to go.

She should have looked, however, inside the candle.

On another occasion, also at night, when another patrol stopped Alice, unobserved she threw a ball of black knitting wool into the bushes. But she held onto one end of it until she knew die ball had fallen some distance away. This end she left to rest on a bush she located. Then after she had been thoroughly searched she went back to her bush, found the end of her strand and hauled her report in.

One morning in a hotel she got a bad fright. The night before she had put her shoes outside of the door to be shined. When she looked for them in the morning they were gone. It was not the loss of her shoes, of course, that scared her so badly as what would happen to her if the slips of paper she had hidden in the heels were

As a matter of fact the German police of the town had take her shoes. They were minutely examining every transient and wanted no departures from the

town until they had had a chance to examine everyone. Taking a guest's shoes was one way of insuring this. And after they got around to Alice they gave her back her shoes neatly shined, questioned her, then let her go.

Other hiding places used for reports were corsets and skirt hems; in neckties and in shoelaces; the handles of umbrellas, of bags, and briefcases; false bottoms of market bags and boxes of cake or fruit. One day she and Charlotte, her lieutenant, were gathered in by a patrol. The two girls were apparently bound for an innocent picnic for they were already munching some of the contents of their basket.

They were again taken to be searched by *The Frog*. Charlotte seemed carefree, even kindly disposed toward all humanity including *The Frog*, for she offered the latter a bite of her bar of chocolate. *The Frog* contemptuously spurned the bribe to her good nature. She searched Charlotte only the more thoroughly; but found nothing forbidden on her, because she had spurned the chocolate.

But Alice for once seemed greatly agitated. For when her mm came to be searched eagerly she thrust her handbag at *The Frog*, but clung fearfully to a length of sausage of which she had taken a bite.

It was not for nothing that *The Frog* was dreaded. She could bead women "without error," as she herself described it, and saw through their tricks as if they were children. Since Alice was eager to have her bag searched and alarmed about her sausage, it was the sausage that interested *The Frog*. With a sharp knife she cut it open carefully, then still more finely sliced it.

She was so disgusted at finding nothing inside that she gave up the search and thrust the two girls out of the guardhouses. When they were on the highway again Alice gave vent to that chuckle of hers and Charlotte, with her bar of chocolate back in the basket, joined her chief in glee.

Then with sheer exuberance they kissed the handbag The Frog had neglected and safely delivered the reports boldly hidden therein.

“Really,” Alice laughed, “they are too stupid for words!”

It was exuberance and not tempered judgment that uttered these words. For before they were through with the Germans Alice and her confederates were destined to pass many a dark hour because the Germans were anything but stupid. Indeed many of the hardships Alice and Charlotte accepted as part of the day’s routine should have kept Alice from the remark.

So thoroughly, for instance, was the Dutch border patrolled that at one point there was no way for the girls to pass except on a dark night over a deep canal. For these crossings Alice used a specially designed costume of knickers, a waist, and a skirt all of material dark in colour but light in weight; for she was an excellent swimmer. But Charlotte could not swim; and for a raft had to depend on a large kneading trough furnished her by a friendly baker. The finicky craft with its passenger Alice had to push as she swam. More than once in the storm season blustery winds made it possible that if the girls survived the crossing they would yet be in danger of pneumonia.

Their adventures with the German military police kept their wits at work without respite; for seldom did hazard present itself twice in the same way, and each new surprise had to be met with as quick a counter. Once when they were on board a train it was stopped between stations for a search by German detectives.

The search began at the front end of the train. The two girls were in the rear car. Slipping out from their compartment to the tracks they crept under the cars toward the front of the train, taking the chance that at any moment it might start and kill them. Then at the front end of the train they got out and stole into the first car, until the moving train told them that once more they had been reprieved.

At another time near the Dutch border they found a sentry posted at a point where no sentry had been provided for in their plans for crossing. His eyes and attention were a danger to the two girls who had to cross his path without challenge inside of thirty minutes, after which the element of time itself would become one of the perils of the situation.

Alice carried with her one of those little mechanical "crickets" with which lecturers signal to those manipulating a stereopticon. The sentry paid no attention to what sounded like a cricket in some shrubbery.

But from a short distance up the road two rowdy-looking youngsters, boys, strolled toward the sentry quarrelling as they came. Their quarrel came to

exploding point as they readied him and with yells and passion they fell to pommelling each other. The sentry ordered them to stop, but the youngsters seemed to have caught the contagious insanity of their elders and kept up a fury of fighting until they rolled between the sentry's legs.

With an oath he leaned his gun against a tree, and with some effort tore them apart. They did not stay apart, however, and the moment he let them go were at it again. Then the sentry concentrated on administering to each boy a spanking such as they would never forget so long as they lived. They never did forget it. But it was with pride that the boys told of it as their contribution in helping Alice and Charlotte cross the danger point.

It tells much of Alice's versatility and of the patriotism of those who helped her that even children played a part in her service. At a certain inn in Ghent, for example, where Alice often stopped while carrying reports, searches by the military were nightly occurrences. Precisely because of that danger Alice chose the inn for her purpose. The frequency of their visits made the police more perfunctory in their examination of the rooms. At the first alarm of their coming Alice slipped out of her bed, threw her dark cloak over her and climbed out of the window onto the roof of a shed and escaped. But her disarranged bed remained and her absence, might have told the police something.

But the landlady of the inn had her two children expressly sleep in one bed in the room next to Alice's. The moment Alice was out of the window one of the

children stole out of their bed and when the police came to Alice's room her bed had an occupant.

Bolder with each success grew Alice, until her spirits, which went on a lark at the slightest provocation, took impish delight in teasing danger. Once an officer of high rank became curious about her and began to ask pointed questions. As usual there was every reason in the world why Alice should not arouse German animosity.

But she felt insolent and to the officer's astonishment he found himself submerged by a torrent of fury poured out in purest German, the vocabulary of a young lady of imperious temper. Only a genuine German aristocrat, his nerves argued, would dare so to abuse an officer of his rank and do it with such perfect Meeklenberg accent. It had the effect on him of a flag or a superior's uniform. For some moments he tried to glare down the fury in the girl's eyes. Then he touched his cap and apologized to Alice.

The incident went to her head, steady though it ordinarily was. One day she was trying to get out of an area specially guarded because it was the headquarters of Prince Rupprecht of Bavaria, commander of the German armies for that sector.

She was carrying with her a sheaf of reports to deliver to Major Cameron and she had them in her handbag. Every time she opened it to show the various sentries her "permission to travel" the re- ports showed too. She had reached

a state of mind in which only the finest line divided keenest wisdom from utter folly.

A sentry looked at her “permission to travel.” “No good here,” he said. “You need a special permission to travel through this zone.”

She tried indignation; but he knew his orders and was too stolid to be tricked. She dropped a little purse in which sounded the clink of gold. But he was too substantial to be bribed. She tried wheedling; but stopped it when he began to show signs of interest in her persistence. In despair she was about to turn back when from a mansion neat' the sentry a personage of highest rank came out attended by several other officers.

She recognized him. It was Prince Rupprecht.

There flashed into her mind a day in Baden-Baden several years before. The German family with whom she was then governess had told her of a session at bridge they had had with Prince Rupprecht in which he had lost a considerable sum. Without hesitation she now crossed the road and halted the Prince.

“Your Highness, don’t you remember me?” she demanded, smiling. “I beat you at bridge at the house of Contessa Orlando in Baden-Baden several years ago.”

He did not recognize her. But he remembered Baden-Baden, the Contessa, and his remarkably poor luck at bridge. Men of a certain age become sensitive about the keenness of their memory. He saluted genially.

“To have won from me at bridge that season was no distinction,” he smiled.
“But you I remember.” She shook her head at him.

“I’m afraid Your Highness is being more gallant than truthful. So I shan’t hold you to it

He laughed and with a bit of raillery passed on.

But the dialogue had its effect on the sentry. And Alice delivered that night to Major Cameron a detailed report of the number and positions of Prince Rupprecht’s batteries in an important zone.

By this time her information service was growing so important to the Allies that more diversified means for forwarding it had to be provided. One day Alice came back from her chiefs with a paper box full of deflated little rubber balloons.

She made no effort to conceal them. A sentry wanted to know their use. “Toys for the kiddies,” she told him. “Of course if you’re afraid I mean to use them to escape in you can have them.”

As usual her insolence had its way and the sentry, a sentimental veteran with children of his own, let her keep them.

Poetry

Two Poems by Shannon Ayres

The Places In Between

How do we know when we've arrived?

Somewhere in the space
in between where we live our lives
and where we go in our dreams,
is a place to define
where lays the infinite
and the vastly divine.

"We've been waiting for you,"

They said.

From the spaces in between.

Where smoke drifts through the winding corridors
of our minds
which lift and carry us.

We are a figment of imagination.

Perhaps.

A blip.

Is this what it means?

How do we hear the voices
of all who came before us

leading us through
the cracks and the seams?

What guidance we seek
in that place
where the Elders and the Angels
can find us.
Somewhere towards the infinite,
where from here
we can only dream and philosophize.

And.
Evaporate.

It's in there that lay the meanings
man's ever hoped to find.
An energy highway should it be seen,
Leading towards the divine.
And to the places in between.

SUN

Bathe within his light
Upon entrance to the night
His strength and warmth enfold you.
It is in this moment,

Where the first inkling of change
Falls upon you,
And sits silently
In the corners and the stillness.
Until in dawn,
Perhaps reborn,
Where we may once again
Bathe within his light.

Poems by Patrick Bruskiewich

Watching the Women Walk By

The soft lap... lap... lap ...
of the water
reminded me of the soft
frap ... frap ... frap ...
of a woman, enjoying herself.

Until the roar of a speedboat
made me think of a machine
with batteries, and then
the din ... dimmed into a hum
then back to ...

The soft lap... lap... lap ...
frap ... frap ... frap ...
of the grand ocean waves lapping and
frapping upon the shore.
I was waiting for my women friends.

It was high tide –
the moon was overhead
dusk ... and here I was
all alone on a bench

watching the women walk by.

Waiting for the sky to darken
And the stars to light up the heavens ...
Waiting for Cassiopeia, Virgo and
Andromeda to come
To keep me company.

He Loves Alone

A Catholic man
in his sixties
hope to be a father.

He lives alone
since his divorce
many years ago.

He has women friends
who know of his hope.
They tell him, do not
give up hope.

They look to younger men;
youth may have beauty
but not wisdom.

He has wisdom
and looks like Henri Matisse.

So he takes to painting
to create his children,
one brush stroke at a time.

The women can sense
his kindness and gentleness
in his art.

He is making love to them
with his paint brush.
Still they stay away.

He loves alone.

The Crack of Lightening

The crack of lightening
The roar of thunder
It shakes me to the quick!

I am scared I always am

When the sky flashes
And Zeus lets loose!

A storm is one of my earliest remembrances
That and the warm
Embrace of my dear mother
As she wrapped her arms around me
And sang a French song

Frere Jacques, Frere Jacques
Dormer vous, Dormer Vous ...

And so I slept out the storm.

Today the crack of lightening
The roar of thunder
I close my eyes and can hear her voice
Even though she is in heaven
her song comes from high

Zeus away with you
I want to hear my mother's voice!

Poetry of the Mundane

Mercedes Benz

Lamborghini

Audi

BMW

Gucci

Versace

Coco

Louis Vitton

Champagne

Vodka

Red, white

or rose

Hawaii

Monacco

Puerto Vallata

Cuba

Oh how ordinary ...

The Bridges to Our Lives

There are three bridges to our lives

The bridge that brings us to our birth
The bridge that is our growing up
And the bridge to our eventual demise.

Just as there are three bridges
That God can send us over
Depending on who we are

and what we do with our lives

There is a that long bridge to Hell,
which is always crowded

There is a that rickety bridge to Purgatory,
which is perhaps one way

and then there is that bridge to Heaven
which is rarely ever jam-packed

There is Little of My Soul Left

Dear God,
Forgive me
For I have sinned.

I have loved
in a world filled
full of hate.

I have been gentle
when others really
only want to be mean.

I have tried to create
Heaven on Earth
but it is hell they really want.

I have tried to be kind and strong
but I have been ground
to dust instead.

Dear God,
Forgive me
For I have sinned.

There is little of my soul left
here crushed beneath my cross
and crown of thorns.

A Few Words ...

When I am in the mood
I sit and write poetry.

Usually it is
when I am nostalgic
or happy about life
or when I feel romantic
or when I feel troubled.

Then I share
A few words ...

Here are some for you!

Are our Lives an Oxymoron?

It's our *only choice*
for sure ...
an *open secret* that
each day we must
trudge, trudge, trudge
off to work!

Is this the meaning of our lives?

Isn't it forty two?

But what is the question?

Isn't it ... why we trudge
to work. Here's a clue
forty-two in binary is

I O I O I O ...

It's off to work we go.

OMG ...

Such *deafening silence!*
Are our lives an oxymoron?
... are we *the living dead?*

There are Minotaur amongst us

Come save us ... Salvador
As we dili and dali
The world has once again
become Monsterous ...

Brothers kill brothers, and sisters too,
and little babes as they wait for their choo choos

to take them to safe haven.

Little angels unknowing
what sins abound about them
who get their wings far ... far ... far
too early as we bury them
In their loving mother's arms

The world is once again
DaDa ... so horrific
So surreal!

There are Minotaur amongst us
we better all run and hide
before they eat us all alive!

Heh ... Throw us a few Coins!

Almost everyone loves poetry
But darned if they'll recompense
The poet for their toil

Almost everyone has their favorite
Poet, perhaps even one who still lives
Who they walk past in the street

Not noticing their begging bowl
Not recognizing their dignity
Nor their poverty!

It is not that the poet

Will turn away your generosity

It's just ...just .. its

that you just ain't generous

to begin with

Heh ... throw us a few coins!

Take the High Road – Few Souls Will Follow You There

I know not how to start the tale
nor how to end it. Perhaps it will
end itself in time. It leaves me pale
to think of it. It leaves me ill
at heart. Take the high road –
few souls will follow you there,
Take the low and your mood
will be crowded out. Care
that you do not trip up
for the vultures will start

to circle, they'll gather to sup,
hoping to tear you apart.

They'll throw you over
the first chance they get
and leave your bones
to blanche in the sun

You Remind Me of Victor Hugo

I have a friend
who is a sculptor.
He struggles just like me
He studies me and says
you remind me of Victor Hugo.
sit – let me do your bust,
but leave your hat on!
I want to sculpt something different.
A bust with a hat on is novel.!
No, Victor Hugo never wore hats.
Like him you like to write stories.
Maybe one day he will be
famous, my artist friend
and his art will make
me famous too. Or maybe
we'll both just go bust!
Two artists who struggled

And now are forgotten.

Something Pink and Flower Like

I try to imagine
how she might look.
How her petals might
curl like something
pink and flower like.
How she is plentiful
and would put Andromeda
to shame. The summer
is young – the sun
it has begun to shine.
The days are bright
They might get hotter
still. The dew might
flow and fill the air
with that indescribable
perfume that draws
us to savour the softness
of something that is
pink and flower like
Oh how the tulips
Blossom.

Is it the Dark Abyss of Death You Fear?

While the dawn cometh before us, we face
the dusk differently, knowing much more
then when our task was ‘take a first breath!’ Graced
by an unknowing and terrifying journey, before
we understood ourselves and the world – now
things are much different. We have grown old ...
time had passed in its mortal toll. How
much we regret, those tasks left undone, told we –
leave it until tomorrow. Well, it has come –
the morrow, and the sorrow, time cannot be overturned.
Let the clocks run down, look nought in a mirror!
That inevitable, unhappy friend cannot be spurned,
And is it the dark abyss of death you fear,
or is it growing old and frail, my dear?

Pictorial: That Must Tickle!



Erotic Poems by Tia Tai

What Do You Prefer?

Oh men, do tell me true
How do you like to see my pubic hue?
Do you prefer a natural bush
Or a clean Brazilian that's plush?

Perhaps the landing strip is more your style
Or the lightning bolt makes you smile
Do you fancy the love heart shape
Or go for the martini with its drape?

Some like the silver fox that's gray
But others think it's best to stay
Within the lines of a speedo or bikini
Which makes it neat and oh so teeny.

Do you like it hidden or on display,
Shaved clean or in a special way,
Do you like to explore and discover
Or leave it to the imagination forever?

So pray, do tell me with great candor
What look makes your heart beat with a thunder

For I am curious to know
How you like your girl's pubic glow.

Let me Decide

I love my little bushy patch,
Short and soft, it's quite a catch.
I don't want to be bare down there,
It makes me feel vulnerable and rare.

A little bit of hair is just fine,
It's natural, not a crime.
I don't need to conform to society's norms,
I'll keep my short pubes, in all forms.

It's my body, my choice, my right,
To keep my fuzz, to hold it tight.
I don't need to please anyone else,
I'll keep my short pubes, for my own self.

So don't judge me or call me names,
For I'm proud of my little mane.
Short and wild, it's just my style,
My short pubes, always bring a smile.

Praise to Women's Breasts

My breasts are not just fatty tissue,
They come in all shapes and sizes, it's true.
Some are small and perky like grapes,
Others are larger and fuller, like cakes.

Some are lopsided or asymmetrical,
One might be bigger than the other, it's normal.
Some are pointed like cones,
Others are round like melons.

Some are saggy and droopy,
But that doesn't make them any less groovy.
They've nourished babies and felt pleasure,
And that is something to always treasure.

So let's celebrate our breasts,
In all their uniqueness and crest.
They are a part of who we are,
And they deserve love and care.

Cleavage

I've learned a simple trick
To make the boys go wild
It's just a little bit of skin

That leaves them all beguiled

It's the curve that draws them in
And captures their attention
The sight of cleavage gives them joy
And fills them with pure temptation

I can see their eyes all wandering
As they scan my chest with glee
And though it's a bit unsettling
It's also quite flattering, you see

After all, why fight the urge
To indulge in such a sight?
My curves are simply too alluring
To resist with all their might

So let the boys stare at my chest
And drink in the view with zeal
For I know that cleavage is a weapon
That they simply cannot conceal.

Yearnings

As the moon rises high in the sky,
I feel a hunger deep inside.

A yearning for something wild and free,
A desire that won't be denied.

I can feel my heart racing fast,
As my thoughts turn to the past.
The countless nights I've spent alone,
Wishing for something to call my own.

But now the fire burns bright and hot,
And I want what I've been missing, a lot.
To feel a man's strong arms around me tight,
And to lose myself in the wildness of the night.

I ache for passion and a lover's touch,
To lose control and give in to lust.
To let my body be free and wild,
And feel the heat that desires piled.

So tonight I'll wander through the streets,
Hoping to find someone to meet.
Someone who will take me to new heights,
And satisfy my deepest, wildest delights.

My Dreams at Night

As I tuck myself into bed at night,

My thoughts begin to take flight.
I dream of things both wild and obscene,
Of dirty talk and kinky scenes.

My lips part open as I speak,
My voice a low and sultry streak.
I whisper things I dare not say,
In the light of the day.

My fantasies run wild and free,
As I let my mind be all it can be.
I long to touch and taste and feel,
To make my lover's senses reel.

I crave the thrill of the untamed,
To explore this world, yet unclaimed.
So let me speak my dirty mind,
And leave my inhibitions far behind.

For when the night falls and I'm alone,
I'll let my deepest desires be shown.
And though some may judge and criticize,
I'll speak my truth, and let my heart arise.

For I am a woman who loves all things raw,
And though society may try to ignore,

I'll never be ashamed of who I am,
For I am a girl who loves to talk dirty, damn.

Flirting

Flirting, it's an art.
For women who want to be smart,
if you learn the tricks and do it right,
he will long for you, all day and night.

Compete with him, just a little,
but don't make him feel belittle.
Show him that you are hard to get
and is worthy of someone perfect.

Touch him, let him feel your warmth,
Make him feel you're not indifferent,
Keep the conversation flowing,
Impress him with your sensual clothing.

Be playful and laugh at his jokes,
Make him feel relaxed and provoke,
Play hard to get, for a while,
Let him enjoy the chase and smile.

Whisper into his ear, softly and seductively,

Let your voice sound, sultry and convincingly,
Bite your lip, for an enticing effect,
Let him imagine, how much you're perfect.

Get close to him, let him feel your touch,
Squeeze past him, closely and hush,
Use open body language, let him in,
Feel the pleasure building up within.

Let him catch you looking, with a spark,
Make him want you, even in the dark,
Text him something naughty, just a tease,
Make him crave for more, just with ease.

Make eye contact, frequently and bold,
Let him know, you're under his control,
Flirting, it's an art, so play it right,
Make him long for you, all day and night.

Guilt

In my head, I'm always torn
Between what's right and what I want more
When I'm feeling heated and forlorn
I do things I'll surely regret for sure

I can't help how my body feels
It craves the touch of another
And despite the consequences, I steal
The moments that I'll pay for later

I cheat on my boyfriend with ease
And make out with my best friend's lover
I even gave in to my sister's husband's please
All just to satisfy my lustful hunger.

I know they're just using me for sex
But I'm willing to play the game
I can't resist the temptation, I'm vexed
And yet, I'll just end up feeling shame

Guilt and regret will always follow
As I wake up the next day, alone
I know I've acted very shallow
And promised to never again atone

But then the cycle repeats itself
As if my body has a mind of its own
I know I'll never be freed from this spell
Until my desire has fully grown

So please forgive my invasive thoughts

And my tendency to act out of line
I'm just a girl whose passion can't be fought
Even when I'll regret it time after time.

His Smell

I know it might seem odd,
But there's something about that smell,
That drives me crazy, oh my god,
I can't help but feel compelled.

It's not just any scent,
It's the specific one that lingers,
A fragrance that's heaven-sent,
Arousing my lustful fingers.

The musk of your manhood,
Mixed with sweat and pheromones,
Is a scent that's understood,
To ignite my lustful bones.

And though some may find it gross,
To me it's irresistibly sexy,
As I inhale, I feel engrossed,
In the passion that surrounds me.

So let me enjoy the aroma,
Of your penis and balls divine,
For it's a scent that's like no other,
And drives me wild every time.

A Kiss

A fiery kiss,
Filled with desire,
Lips locked in bliss,
Setting our hearts on fire.

The touch of skin on skin,
Electricity in the air,
Hearts racing with a grin,
As we lose ourselves in the moment fair.

Passionate and sweet,
Our love for each other shines,
As we surrender to the heat,
And lose track of time.

The world fades away,
As we share this intimate bliss,
Our bodies sway,
In a moment that we will never miss.

Passionate kisses,
That keep us aflame,
Love that never misses,
And forever remains the same.

In the Company of Boys

I bask in the presence of boys,
The center of attention, I enjoy,
Discussing girls, with a sexy voice,
In revealing dress, I make them rejoice.

Talking of sex, kinks, and fetishes,
The freedom to speak without any glitches,
A daring spirit, I never flinch,
And when it comes to porn, I'm always in.

Flirtatious banter makes me gleam,
Boys around me look like a dream,
I love the power it gives me,
The attention is what I aim to see.

So let's talk about things that make us blush,
Secret desires, we need to hush,
The company of boys is what I crave,

And their attention is what I always save.

Let's Have Fun!

Looking for a guy, but not for romance,
No strings attached, just a quick little dance.

Someone to spend a night, or maybe two,
Not looking for forever, just something to do.

No need for roses, or romantic poems,
I just want someone to satisfy my hunger and roam.

No hearts to break, no love to find,
Just a quick little escape, for my restless mind.

I know what I want, and I won't pretend,
Just a guy who's down, for a night with no end.

No need for labels, or promises of forever,
Just two consenting adults, making memories we'll treasure.

So if you're up for it, and you're feeling brave,
Come take a chance with me, just for the day.

We'll live in the moment, with no regrets or fears,

Just two people, having fun and shedding no tears.

Mistake

I never meant to send those pics
To someone I didn't know
But in a moment of distraction
my finger tapped on 'send' and it just went so

For hours I waited, with bated breath
Curled up in a ball on my bed
Wondering if he'd seen them yet
Wishing I could just crawl under the covers instead

But then the phone buzzed
A notification came through
And I finally faced the music
And opened the message, ready to undo

But his response wasn't what I hoped for
Instead of disgust or anger, he was curious
He wanted to know more, see more
And I couldn't help but feel a little delirious

I never meant for this to happen,
A moment of carelessness led to distraction,

Sending a photo to a stranger, without caution,
Leaving me with nothing but pure attraction.

One thing led to another
And soon we were chatting non-stop
couldn't believe what had happened
the mistake had opened up new doors, like my mind had popped

Messages back and forth, leading to temptation,
A conversation that sparked with endless infatuation,
The desire between us grew with each conversation,
Leading to one thing, and one thing only, pure sensation.

I gave in to the temptation
Took more pics, shared more of my intimate self
It was exhilarating, so forbidden
But I couldn't stop, wanted to delve

I knew the risks, but my heart took over,
As we met in a place where only love could conquer.
With each touch, my body surrender,
To the moment where I was left no longer.

What started as an accident,
Turned into a moment of pure bliss,
As we had something that was heaven-sent,

A connection that led to more than just a simple kiss.

But now I stand here, with regret in my heart,
Knowing what I gave up was far too much to start.
A mistake that will forever stay in my memory,
The conflict within me, will remain a mystery.

In Memory of the Boys I have Enjoyed

I've seen them all, big and small
Smooth and bumpy, short and tall
Each one unique, with its own charm
I can't help but feel a sense of awe and alarm

Some are curved, like a banana
Others straight, like a flagpole in Havana
Some are thick, like a summer sausage
Others thin, like a pencil in its usage

But size isn't everything, as we all know
It's the motion that makes the juices flow
Some move like a snake, so smooth and sleek
Others like a piston, strong and unique

Every dick I've encountered has left a mark
A memory of pleasure, like a sweet spark

I may never see them all, but that's okay
For each one I've had, I'll cherish and replay

So here's to the cocks, of every kind
For they bring pleasure and joy, to every mind
May we cherish and appreciate them all
For they bring pleasure and happiness, in their own way and drawl.

Unconditional Love

I ache to please you, my love
To feel your body quiver and move
To taste your passion on my tongue
And feel your heart beat like a drum

But you're so preoccupied, it seems
With games and screens and other things
You watch the match with eager eyes
While I long to hear your moans and sighs

I continue giving you a BJ from under the table
or rimming your ass and balls
while you are enjoying it like a king
having dinner or attending calls

I dress up in my finest clothes

And put on makeup for you to adore
uncomfortable heels and sexy accessories
so that you don't feel bore

But you're too busy with your phone
Looking at *girly* pics that make you groan
sometimes actress, sometimes ... star
or stalking some girl near and far

I offer myself to your whims
Without a second thought or any shims
ready to do no matter how
kinky or degrading it seems

But you compare me to others you've fucked
telling me how sexy and good she was
how nice it felt to fill her pussy
and how big her boobs and ass was

I let you use me however you wish
always ready to *offer all of me* ...
but you fuck me without giving me any attention
while watching your favorite porn

I plan for some romantic date
with decoration and good music

i love to spend time with you
every moment that i can cherish

but you don't care about foreplay
you just look for your release
you use me like a sex toy, a flashlight
and dump me whenever you please ...

I long to feel your love for me
And have you prioritize my ecstasy
But it seems that all you care about
Is finding pleasure from some other bout

You mock me, degrade me,
humiliate me for all i do for you
But still I come back every time,
coz my love is true.

So I'll continue to offer myself
In the hope that someday you'll see
my love for you is pure and unconditional
and you also feel the same about me.

The Art of Her

Her body is a work of art,

From her eyes that enchant my heart,
To her face that speaks of grace,
And her lips that I long to taste.

Her hairs flow like a cascade,
And her neck invites a gentle embrace,
The curve of her boobs is a sight to behold,
And her underarm is as soft as gold.

Her cleavage is a secret garden,
And her navel, a divine button,
Her waist, a dreamy hourglass,
And her thighs, a pair I'll forever stare in class.

Her *bum*, a work of perfection,
And her legs, a mighty creation,
And the littlest details, like her feet,
Are all a part of this magnificent feat.

Her body is a work of art,
A masterpiece that will never depart,
An endless fountain of beauty and grace,
That will forever hold a special place.

Pictorial: Say Cheese! ... MAGA ...



Popcorn

{Popcorn: Popular + Corny ...}

Bachelorette Bob by Joanna M...

[Whistler] Just a few weeks ago my friends and I held a bachelorette party in which I was the maid of honor. It was my job to organize the party and sort out the main activity. Through a friend in Vancouver I heard about *Bachelorette Bob* who had a funny way of doing a trivial pursuit game.

His trivial pursuit game was simple. He would MC and ask the questions. If you got a question wrong you had to take off a piece of clothing. If you got his questions correct ... he would take off a piece of clothing.

To begin with he had six pieces of clothing: a pair of socks (that counted as two), pants, a shirt, a sweater and a loin cloth ... for added measure.

*He said the loin cloth was there so as not to shock anyone ...
he would not be the one to choose to take it off ...
It was left to the bride and no one else ...
and she would have to take it off with her teeth!*

Well, Bachelorette Bob had been around, hadn't he? Oh I should tell you if you got a question wrong he would take off your piece of clothing. If you got it right he would let the bride to be do the honors on him.

Boy had he chosen the wrong women to play trivial pursuit ... for that was a game that all but got us through high school. We had our own version where

instead of using store bought questions we made up our own and played the game with our own *gigglicious* questions.

In perhaps twenty five minutes flat *Bachelorette Bob* was there standing before us as bare as the day he was born and the most any one of us had to take off was their blouse and skirt ...

He let us take pictures with him. Here I am ... blushing as you can see.



And here is Bachelorette Bob letting the bride have some last time fun ...



While we wanted to play with his *thingy* ... he wouldn't let us.

But he did spend the rest of our party pouring us wine and serving the hors d'oeuvres. We had a bow tie but he refused saying he would be over dressed.

The Phallic Iceberg by Ryan Clark

[St. John's] It was a slow news day and then this came across the wire!



The bergs drift down off the coast of Newfoundland each spring. They come in all shapes and sizes.



Now you can say ... you've seen it all, can't you!

An Instrument of Pleasure and of Pain by Emilie Wu

[Vancouver] My old boyfriend only seemed to enjoy pain. He did not seem to enjoy pleasure. Are all boys like that? After the photo shoot we did with my sister, my old boyfriend began to ask that we do a *threesome*. I should never had let my younger sister photograph me *man-handling* him.

After a third time asking for a *threesome* I broke up with him. A few weeks later I heard through one of my girlfriends that he is now with someone else. I hear she is a domatrix and he is really being manhandled by her.

After a few months without a relationship, I have a new boyfriend. I met him at a party of a friend or a friend. One of my girlfriends did not want to go to the party by herself and so I agreed to go with her. It was a wild party!

My new boyfriend doesn't know about my old boyfriend. He doesn't know the fun I have already had. In fact I think my new boyfriends believes I am still a virgin. That's a big thing in the Chinese community. Boys can be boys ... but girls have to be good. That's really unfair!

We dated two months before things got serious. The first time we were intimate, I found out that my new boyfriend enjoys pleasure mixed with pain at the same time. How I found this out was because I suggested we play a game of *truth or dare*.

The version of *truth or dare* I play uses a deck of cards. The numbered cards are *truths* and the face cards are *dares*. The red cards are for good challenges, and the dark cards are for not so good. The aces are the wild. When he get an ace you have to let the other person take off a piece of your clothing.

He got four aces ... I guess he is unlucky. Off came his shirt, his pants, his socks and then his underwear. When it came to his underwear he valiantly accepted his fate. I played the naive girl ...

It was now the classic clothed female naked male game ...

His penis is not as big as my old boyfriend's. But I guess a penis is a penis, isn't it? He dared me to play with him but I played coy. I did dare him to have fun with himself ... but I wouldn't let him pop.

He was at the edge of an orgasm for at least an hour. It was agony for him, but he said he was enjoying the sensation. It was then that admitted he enjoys pleasure ... mixed with pain ... at the same time.

We talked about this and have sorted out an arrangement. I myself only enjoy pleasure but my pleasure can have an edge to it, as long as there is no pain. For example, if you want to blind fold me that is fine. If you want to tie me up and tease me that is fine as well, along as there is no pain! I have done quite a few things for the thrill of it but I have never let anyone *miss-handle* me like I *man-handled* by ex boy friend.

Here I am being teased by an artist friend who does Shibari. My hands are free by the way.... Out came a soft feather and he tickled me all over!



Each time my new boyfriend and I are intimate we alternate between giving and receiving *favors*. We actually don't have sex! We just play. We arrange matters a week in advance so that there is no misunderstanding.

My new boyfriend likes that we use toys. Here is one of them.



Can you guess what it is used for? Here is what he looks like before the toy.



He's not very big is he?

Watch what happens when you put the toy on him!



When you put half of it on him he starts to grow! Then the second half ...



Soon he is three times bigger! He says it gives him an equal amount of pain and of pleasure. Now, together we can have lots of fun, believe me!

Pictorial: A Mother Expecting ...



My Afternoon with a Knob ... by Samantha

[Boston] After two years without good sex a girl gets desperate. I was busy at college and did not have time for a steady boyfriend. The boys I was meeting in night spots around Boston were anything but desirable. They were Nerds from M.I.T. and drunks from Harvard. On the other side of town were the *dreads* ... which are more trouble than they are worth, believe me! Left to my own pleasures ...thank goodness for rechargeable batteries.

I was not the only girl in my circle that is frustrated by life. My friends and I talked it over. Afterwards, in private one of my close friends told me about a *knob* she had tried him out (*knob* is slang for a male concubine.) *Knobs* have been kicking around Boston for a long time. *Knob* is a 17th century slang word for penis. She said he was fantastic, so I decided to try him out too. For my own safety I decided to film our encounter. My friend did the filming.



It was my friend who brought him to my apartment and introduced me to him. They had been enjoying each other for half a year, once or twice a month. She was his only patron. Before we began he showed me a doctor's certificate to say he was healthy. *Knobs* do their gigs for free, if you can believe this! *Knobs* do everything you ask them to do. I watched as he took off his clothes ...



Then he showed me his *knob*, and we talked about what I wanted from him.



To begin with he was shy and not very talkative. On the other hand I was nervous and could not stop talking. You can see he is bushing all over!



He agreed to my terms in their entirety and so I decided to continue. He wasn't to cum ... I am not on the pill and so I did not want to get pregnant.



I watched his eyes as I undressed ...the eyes of a man are so telling to who they really are. His eyes turned away in shyness ... which was kind of cute.



Then I let him admire me. He said I was very beautiful. His eyes were kind and his words soft and genuine. I asked him why he *knobbed* and he told me.



He was a Catholic boy who went to an all-boys school in Boston. He had gone out on dates with Catholic girls but found the experience unrewarding ... emotionally and psychologically.

“What about physically?” I asked.

“That too, but that’s really not why I do *knobbing*!” Then he explained that he wanted to enjoy life without running any risks ... He began to sit as an artist model at a studio in Boston. After one of the classes he was approached by one of the women artists and propositioned. This shocked him! She was twice his age at least. He stopped sitting for a few weeks.

Then he heard about *knobbing* and decided he wanted to try it. He happen upon my friend and things worked out well for the two of them. I trusted my girlfriend and she trusted him ... so I let him *knob* me ...



I could tell he was more nervous than I was. I asked him if I could touch and he said yes! He was throbbing. His hand against my thigh was very hot.



I was surprised on how soft his penis was. And it curved upwards! I had never seen that in a boy before. Mind you I had only touched one or two penises before. I said “don’t enter me.” He nodded. I let him tease me ...



He did not push. He moved his penis in a circle. The sensation was wild!



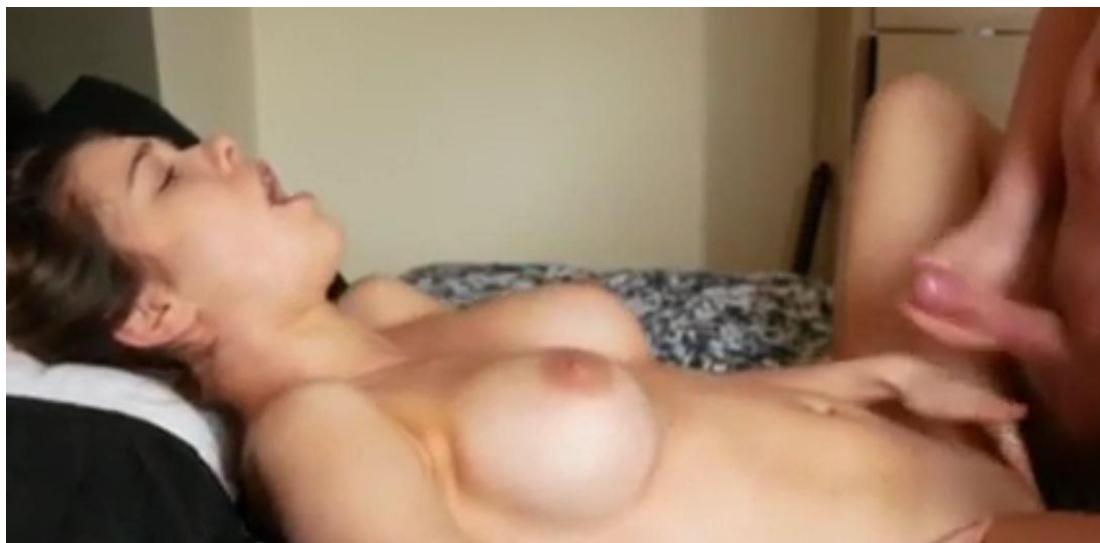
He just moved the tip of his penis up and down rubbing against my clitoris. I could feel myself getting wet ... I could see my wetness on the tip of his penis.



He knew what he was doing!



His *knob* was driving me crazy! I couldn't help myself. I pushed him aside and started to please myself.



I felt his warm hand caress my leg. That amplified the sensation. My clitoris was throbbing.



I orgasm'd ...but just a little one. I don't orgasm very often and it usually takes me more time than this. With a *knob* there made things so much better!



I rubbed myself harder and my orgasm grew in intensity. I had never masturbated in the presence of others ... so this added to the incredible ardour of the moment.

I moved my hand and he rubbed me some more ... it felt so good!



oh ... Oh ... OH ...



Oh my God! My orgasm shuddered as high as my uterus ... something that never happened before.

I even squirted ...something I had never done before either. I was so embarrassed.



Then I lost it and started to giggle hysterically. He knew it was time to go ...



He didn't say a word as he gathered up his clothes and made ready to leave. I just lay there enjoying the splendour of the experience. He waved back at me as he opened the door to leave. I blew him a kiss and said "... thanks ...".

When he had left my friend and I talked. As I gave her a hug she told me that *knobbing* was done by poor Catholic boys that could not afford to go to a brothel.

That surprised me. I said “*then we must be the prostitutes?*”

She nodded and together we both giggled hysterically.

Swedish Cheesecake by Constance Tomkinson

{An excerpt from Les Girls}

In my dreams the Cabarethallen was a marble edifice with tiers of boxes, layers of galleries and clusters of chandeliers. In reality' it was a simple wooden building painted pink. From the outside it was hardly recognizable as a theater and inside it had the simplicity of a public hall. It was set in the middle of the Liseberg. This summer amusement center was not of the peanuts and popcorn variety but a beautiful pleasure garden, typically Scandinavian, with huge flower beds, statues and fountains. There were elegant restaurants of attractive modern design and a cheap one, a replica of a Tyrolean inn, which resembled a large cuckoo clock. Records were replayed all day on the amplifier - classical, semiclassical - and occasionally the Swedish star Zaruh Leander sang in her haunting voice the popular German song "*Ich habe vielleicht noch nicht geliebt.*"

I wondered what the Millerettes looked like from out front, and I only had to wait two days before my curiosity was satisfied. I had never mastered spins. "It's simple," my teacher used to say in class. "Just pick a point and jerk your head to look at the same point." But I could not resist peeking on the way round. I would become giddy after a couple of turns, but on stage in our ersatz Viennese waltz I had to go on spinning like a top - a top slowly running down. "If I could only reverse," I kept thinking, "I'd be all right." But if I had, I would have run into the other fifteen, who were hard on my tail. They were revolving expertly, a whirling mass of pink, but with every turn I became shakier. The

faces in the audience were swimming as I reeled stage-right towards a gap in the footlights. Suddenly I was in mid-air and sinking fast. With a muffled thud and a faint tinkle of cymbals I landed on the bass drum. The drummer, muttering Swedish curses, untangled me from the cymbals, pulled me off the drum, propped me up with his right hand and went on drumming with his left.

I lay dazed in the orchestra pit for a moment – the strains of "The Merry Widow" dinning in my ears. I tentatively waggled an arm and then a leg; nothing seemed to be broken. When I opened my eyes the steep rake of the stage and the shallow orchestra pit gave me a glimpse of the girls in action. "My God!" I thought. "It's as bad as a concert party on Wigan Pier." The show was being done on a shoestring and it looked it. The waltz dresses, which Mr. Miller assured us looked like satin under lights, continued to look like sateen. I tried to see the girls as if I were a stranger. Most of them were extremely young, some pretty, some not. The make-up concealed their usual theatrical pallor, but it could not hide the fact that most of them were thin and narrow across the shoulders.

I struggled to my knees for a better view of the chorus. My heart warmed to them; it was impossible to see them for long with a cold, calculating eye. They were my friends. "Perhaps they aren't very good," I whispered to the drummer, who did not understand English, "but you've got to hand it to them. They're in there pitching - every inch of the way." The heavy breathing and beads of perspiration were proof of that. Here and there a personality shone out: Pat, with her bright red hair, and Sally, with her blonde curls, had style. Beside the others, their dancing seemed effortless.

I looked down to the end of the line. There was Mary, a tall Lancashire lass. Too near for the balance of the line was Glynis, a mere five feet. It was Glynis who had appeared at the audition in rompers looking as if butter would not melt in her mouth, but first impressions can be misleading. Here she was, wielding a wicked eye and injecting sex appeal even into the waltz.

As I peered over the drummer's shoulder a patch of bare skin caught my eye. It belonged to Angela, who, being chubby, could never quite zip her costume up the side" Angela was a lady, and with every gesture she was making that clear to the audience. I followed her movements across the stage. She showed her ballet training. Angela had studied with Madame Rambert. This was socially acceptable; it was after she left the classes in Notting Hill Gate that she started to slip.

As the music wound to a close with a roll of drums in my ear, the girls formed a circle, spreading out their pink petal skirts to form a rose. That was the way the number had started and should have ended - except that one of the petals had fallen.

Immediately the curtains closed, the anxious face of Mr. Miller appeared through a door under the stage. He crept towards me on his hands and knees to avoid being seen by the patrons.

"Broken anything?" he whispered.

"No," I said uncertainly.

"Can you stand?"

"I think so."

His face relaxed. "Come on! You'll be late for the next number." He half dragged me out of the orchestra pit and under the stage.

"What happened?" he asked, as he rushed me along

He sniffed. "You haven't been drinking?"

As we reached the top of the stairs I saw Anton and Vladimir, members of the strong-arm act "Riette and the Romaine Brothers," solemnly exercising themselves. They were White Russians, posing as an English act, traveling on Argentinian passports, and speaking mostly French. They were warm-blooded creatures, and took every opportunity of dallying with the girls - any girl, they were not particular. But there was one small obstacle in their way. Riette did not approve of their frittering away their substance on women, and those two great hulking men were terrified of the blonde wisp they tossed so casually about the stage. It was a game doomed from the start, but they never lost hope.

Mr. Miller, knowing their weakness, tried to steer me past, but we were stopped. They turned towards me, their eyes swimming with sympathy. "You have had the accident?" asked Anton, putting his arm around me. "It

was terrible crash. You are broken? Yes?"

"Oh, no!" I said casually. "I just slipped."

"She slipped!" Vladimir said mournfully, stroking my arm.

"That can be bad thing." Anton gave me an affectionate squeeze.

Mr. Miller was anxious to extricate me, but as these two towered over him, he did not wish to appear abrupt. He smiled uncertainly. "She's got a quick change, boys," he said, trying to cut short their tender inquiries. They turned on him menacingly. "You do not ask this poor person to go on after she slips," said Vladimir.

"You are not human, man ..." Anton was interrupted by the shrill voice of Riette. "Vladimir! Anton! Venez ici!" They vanished in the middle of a sentence.

In the dressing room there were anxious queries, but the tune changed when they knew I was all right.

"Trying to break your bloody neck, were you? Taking the easy way out," Pat remarked, diving into her toy-soldier tunic.

"Did she fall. or was she pushed?" asked Mary, adjusting her tin hat.

The costumes into which they were hurriedly changing were not new. They had displayed the charms of platoons of Millerettes before our time, and by now the poor toy soldiers looked as if they had suffered some rough treatment in the nursery. The costumes were on the generous side, and I being slight, mine hung on me like a sack. When I first put this uniform on, the shorts, which were intended to be saucy, if not downright racy, sagged to my knees; the epaulettes were nearer to my elbows than my shoulders. Pleats and gussets could not conceal that this particular toy soldier had lost most of his stuffing.

Winding a stocking around my head to anchor my hat, I contemplated the next number with distaste. It opened with a great roll of drums - and we were off. The choreography was erratic: at times we would move with stiff arms and stiff legs like toy soldiers, then quite out of character we would burst into a spurt of loose-limbed tap, jiggling about like puppets on strings' One false step in this quick-moving number could create chaos. In forming our stiff-legged fours, if I stiff-legged it to the left instead of the right, I would tangle myself up in another set of fours. If I took a wrong turning, I would come face to face with somebody going the right way; but worst of all, if I did not get in the right place on the right beat, I might get a sharp hick from behind.

I felt safer in the opening number, which was intended to get the show off to a rollicking start with a gay display of leg. We entered sideways with arms twined round each other's waists traveling with a half kick, a full kick and a half kick again. Shoulder to shoulder we became telepathic. I could guess what the others were going to do, and if I flagged, there was somebody on each side to hold me up.

It was in the finale - described by Angela as "sheer unadulterated corn" - that I unexpectedly shone. We bounded on with toothpaste-advertisement smiles. We were coy and girlish, wagging our fingers saucily at the audience and flouncing our little bustles in their faces.

With every movement we were projecting, "Aren't we happy? Wouldn't you like to know us, you delightful people, and I mean you, *yes*, you," We made our exit, I blush to admit, throwing kisses at the audience. The girls were most complimentary about my efforts in this number - they thought that this was where my real talents lay. But my pleasure in this small success was spoiled by twinges of conscience. Martha Graham did not stoop to her public; here was I bent double in an effort to bewitch. A small shudder used to go down my spine: "Whatever would dear Martha say, if she could see me now?" To reassure myself, I would reply, "She wouldn't want you to starve - well, not for long, anyway," but I never entirely convinced myself.

At first I had thought the girls rather pathetic, but I was wrong. They were full of spirit and as cheerful as London sparrows" Many came from poorish families who had scraped together the necessary shillings to send them to dancing class, and now that they were earning they were dutifully sending home a pound a week. If they had aspirations, these were carefully concealed; I soon learned that the remark, "She's ambitious. She'll get on," was highly derogatory. It was protective, for few had talent. This was an attitude foreign to me, and I was careful to hide my own ambitions, which occupied the greater part of my interior. I worked hard to make my taps as clear and precise as Pat's

and Sally's, and constantly nagged them to teach me some as yet unmastered step.

As a group, the girls were respectable - less from moral reasons than a fear that once on the skids you couldn't tell where you might end. But they never sat in judgment on their friends. If you wanted to be a casual sleeper, it was all right with them, but it was a rather-you-than-me-dear attitude. Firmly in their minds was Mum's advice - "A girl's best friend is her virtue."

They might like Sweden -- once they returned home - but now they were homesick for Mum and Dad, fish and chips and the semidetached villa in Shepherd's Bush or Tooting. Gothenburg was too dull, the Liseberg too rarefied for their tastes. It was a poor substitute for the jollifications of Blackpool with its friendly crowds and vulgar fun. In the wonderful Swedish climate with its clear bright sun, they pined for some of their own erratic weather. One of them said to me wistfully, "Doesn't it ever rain here?"

The girls quickly formed attachments and separated into groups of twos and threes. Glynis and Mary had become friends. One was tall and one short; Mary spoken a soft north-country drawl and Glynis in the lilting tones of the Welsh; but their personalities were far more incongruous. Mary was highly respectable - the same could not be said of Glynis. She never told us what she was up to, and we hardly dared guess! but nightly as her wardrobe grew fatter, the margin of doubt grew thinner. Every evening she was picked up at the stage door by affluent Swedes - known to us as her Provident Society. We never discovered how and where she acquired them, but one was always there.

The company was an ideal base for her operations, and she was no mean operator. You might not approve of Glynis, but you could not dislike her – she was too amusing. She and Mary thought of themselves as members of the exclusive West End Club -- not members in such high standing as par and Sally, but they had been in a West End show once, and that could never be taken from them.

Angela and I managed to attach ourselves to the club – making what we hoped was A Sophisticated Six. We were the ones who benefited from Glynis' booty. Our dressing room was full of flowers, and we lived on expensive chocolates and luscious imported fruit. Glynis was a generous giver, but we were not gracious receivers. There was more than one ungrateful remark as we devoured her largess. Pat's despairing cry expressed our feelings: "Not chocolates again! What's wrong with a veal and ham pie ?" We felt it was only right that Glynis should feed us, for it was because of her that we were unable to feed ourselves. The small pension where the others were living modestly was not for Glynis. She had installed us in one of the best hotels in the town, which, even with special rates for "pros," was far too grand for our pockets.

The attitude of the Sophisticates to the others was kindly but condescending. Giynis commented, "They absolutely shriek Aker Streer, poor darlings." I realized that this must be damning, but what did it mean? Glynis was staggered at my ignorance.

"Haven't you ever played Manchester?"

"No," I said apologetically.

"Well, don't. It's a street there full of theatrical 'digs.'"

"What's wrong with that?" I ventured.

"They're the end. Dark, antimacassary and smelling of stewed cabbage."

"Oh, I see."

"I don't think you do, dear," said Glynis patiently, "but let it pass - let it Pass."

Angela knew that the Sophisticates were not ladies, but as they came from the aristocracy of the chorus-girl world, she was prepared to overlook it. The others were grouped in her mind as the underprivileged' I found it difficult to understand the shades of social difference which were so clear to Angela. I was aware that they did not possess Mayfair accents, but they would have to add and subtract a few aitches for me to notice anything amiss. I did not appreciate what worlds lay between Angela's blasé "Thank you, so much," and the others' warm "Ta"" and "Thanks, ever so." It was tedious for Angela to have to tell me her family were well connected, but she made the effort.

Angela's snobbery, her only failing, was not wearing ;once she had established her point, she coasted. Feeling the responsibilities of her class towards those who had not had her advantages, she would inquire kindly if they were happy

in their pension and if they had heard from home. Angela was as out of place as I in this outfit, but her reasons for joining it were equally sound' She had come to Sweden to escape the boredom of life in a Surrey vicarage. The Church was well represented on this tour. My father was a minister in the United Church of Canada. Because we had this common bond, Angela accepted me as an equal. But our first meetings had not been auspicious. Angela, who knew the value of a prop, had arrived at rehearsals with a neatly folded copy of *The Times*. I read it eagerly in the breaks. Eventually she was goaded into saying, "I see you like *The Times*. It's on sale, you know." I knew this. I also knew it cost two pence. Such an expenditure would have unbalanced my budget, and I told her so. Angela had little more ready cash than I, but a kind heart. She appeared the next day with two copies.

During rehearsals in London she had taken me to her home for the weekend to recuperate. I could not imagine what her father, a rural dean, would have to say about the adventure on which we were embarking – plenty, I thought. Angela gave me the lead before we arrived.

"I don't think it's necessary to go into a big thing about the show, do you?" she said in a bored voice.

"Oh, no!" I could see her point.

"It's all really rather tiresome."

When I saw the dean, a formidable figure in his biretta and long black cassock, I was a little uneasy, but there was no cause for anxiety. Few questions were asked, and fewer facts offered. He was a busy man, with a great deal on his mind; he could hardly be expected to take on more. His wife was fully occupied in mothering the parish. She may well have offered up a small prayer for anybody who crossed Angela's path, but she had no fears for Angela; she was her father's daughter.

Apart from a common ecclesiastical background, our families differed. Mine were intensely interested in everything I did. I was a long way from home, and they were a little anxious. I sent them long, unvarnished reports of my exploits, but I neglected to mention that I 'was not always eating. By return I received the family news and gossip of the congregation. My father's address to the Rotary Club, my sister's tour with her college basketball team, even the plot of my mother's latest novel seemed more real than my present existence. We were bound in a conspiracy to keep my activities from the congregation. Officially I was studying abroad - and everybody assumed that it was music. I used to sing in the choir; naturally, the next step was grand opera.

Trixie's energetic numbers used up calories and, halfway through the show, we were forced to refuel. In the interval I threw my camel-hair coat over my toy-soldier costume and dashed to the *Cuckoo Clock*, where I selected assorted pastries for the ravenous Sophisticates. The silver tap shoes and an expanse of bare leg drew the attention of the entire clientele, but it was the sight of my stage make-up (Leichner's Peach Dark liberally rouged, with winged eyebrows and my false Jersey-cow eyelashes) which brought all

business to a stop. As I debated whether to buy crullers, kaffekaka or spritz rings, the customers froze in position, contemplating this wicked spectacle. I could not have produced more of an effect if I had been a bearded circus lady. The waitress seemed to think it was good for business, and occasionally slipped in a couple of extra wienerbrod.

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After the show, hungry once more, the Sophisticates, without make-up and Glynis (who was busy frying other fish), would make for the *Cuckoo Clock*. On our first visit we had taken hours to order our food, while I flipped through the pages of my dictionary translating all the lovely things we could have, if we had the money.

The girls were unable to stand much of this. They thanked me for my offer to interpret the entire menu, but they said they would rather remain ignorant. Would I kindly restrict my efforts to the items opposite the lowest numerals. Unfortunately, these humble dishes were ignored by my dictionary, and we were forced to order blind. We had some nasty shocks when we entered into the culinary unknown - one delicacy, which still haunts me, turned out to be cold fish porridge. The untranslatable was almost inedible. Mercifully, I deciphered korv and Pilsner, and after that there was no more studying of the menu or the dictionary. We lived on sausages and beer.

Being in a troupe is an insidious business; it creeps into your private life. We went everywhere together. To go off on your except with a man - was considered antisocial. Separated from the others, I felt a little lost, and found myself automatically getting in step with people on the street. We ate, wore

and did the same things. Not content with being dressed alike on stage, the six of us felt compelled to invest part of our first week's pay in identical pairs of white linen slacks – the vogue in Sweden that summer – which we wore every day.

We shared rooms, food, make-up and clothes – everything but men. It was a pleasant way of living if a little claustrophobic and it made for real camaraderie. Occasionally we had our little tiffs but we were united against the world and the management.

Any variation from the general pattern was considered eccentric. Because I was never parted from my dictionary and Thimm's € grammar, they had decided I was an intellectual. That was outrageously eccentric, but they forgave me. I was a Canadian and probably couldn't help it. They heard me speaking Swedish with great aplomb, but they did not notice a certain monotony and brevity in my conversations. My most reliable sentence, "Jag talar inte svenska." led nowhere. How could it? After you have said, "I cannot speak Swedish," there is nothing more to say. At times I became adventurous and repeated phonetically a line from Mr. Thimm's "Conversational Phrases," but again we came to a full stop. Mr. Thimm, not being clairvoyant, didn't know what the answer would be.

Never have I had such a struggle with a language. just would not stick. The trouble stemmed from the fact that I did not trust Mr. Thimm. I simply could nor believe that a girl was a *flicka*, and a boy a *pojke*. He was joking. Where

could you go with that attitude? Where I did. Nowhere. I acquired some prestige by my efforts, but that did not satisfy a soul hungry for knowledge. The fault did not lie with Mr. Thimm, but that grammar cost me half a crown secondhand, and I have not been able to find it in my heart to forgive him.

After the show opened in Gothenburg we continued to rehearse until there was mutiny. Pat and Sally told Mr. Miller frankly that no amount of rehearsals would improve those numbers, and moreover, they had not come to Sweden to spend all day in the Cabarethallen. Since six girls would be missing, rehearsals were called off. After that on most days we took off for the beach. We had discovered that one of the blue and white street-cars would take us to a nudist retreat where we could get brown all over. It was a world of Eves -- the Adams had a section to themselves. We were self-conscious at first, but we soon got over it. All except Glynis; she thought it all quite shocking, and remained prim and conspicuous to the end in bra and panties.

Sometimes we visited a pool near the Liseberg. It was here I acquired Gustav; he was not middle-aged and affluent, like Glynis's followers, but tall, blonde and twenty-one – I thought he was as handsome as a Viking. He hoped to improve his English through me, and I had my own reasons for cultivating Gustav. My family were most anxious that I should not waste my time. Was I making the most of my opportunities? Was I absorbing Sweden? It was difficult to take notes, surrounded as I was, but I had decided to write an article explaining the Swedes to the world – after all, I had been there several weeks. To know one, I reasoned, was to know them all. Gustav was to be that one.

Gustav's social round did not include the Cabarethallen, and he was shaken to find out what I was doing in Gothenburg, and even more so after he had seen the show. I underplayed my terpsichorean side, and laid heavy emphasis on the minister's daughter. Gustav was a student at Uppsala, and planned to go into the diplomatic service. He confided in me that great things were expected of him. Even though on holiday, he continued his studies, but on Saturdays after the show, looking very smart in his white student's cap, he would call for me at the stage door, and we would go dancing. For me it was like a sailor rowing in the park, but Gustav was a beautiful dancer, and waltzing with him never made me dizzy; we could always reverse.

I found I had a mission with Gustav, for he was anti-British and pro-German. I saw my duty. I pleaded, I argued, I cajoled. Sitting by the side of the pool in my damp bathing suit, I would fix him with an intense eye and say, "Iron ore you sell them, *jah!*" and then with calculated disdain, "But your soul, *nej!* That cannot be possible."

He would protest, "But Sveden *och* Yermany, it is natural alliance."

"Natural my foot!" I would say heatedly. My colloquialisms confused poor Gustav terribly. "With the devil one does not make pact." I garbled words, but I never minced them.

I gradually developed a form of reconstructed English which incorporated all the common faults of those who tried inexpertly to speak it. It was nor so bewildering, and made them less self-conscious, if I also spoke it badly. In

time I built it into an effective€ system. Using their forms, and my words, disregarding tenses, avoiding subtleties, mixing idioms, dodging known pitfalls and injecting bits of mime to see them over the humps, I would plow on. If they even thought they could speak English, they could follow me. My system undermined Gustav's grammar' but it gave him infinite confidence, though I have an uncomfortable feeling that his examiners may have felt that for the higher diplomatic protocol such confidence was not enough.

My work on Gustav's politics was not in vain' He became anti-German and a stanch Anglophile. He broke off relations with his German girlfriend, and from the picture of that gauleiterish Fräulein, I felt only good could come of that. He proposed marriage. Evading an immediate answer, I said, "We should be waiting, yes?"

"Ach, yes! Already ten years," he said' complacently confusing his adverbs. Gustav's feelings were apparently well under control.

Gustav's friendship 'was not without its risks' Ever since I survived a childhood journey from Iowa to New York with my father at the wheel of a model T Ford, I have felt I owned a charmed life. Gustav tested this theory more than once. If I had stayed with him, my luck might not have held.

During a picnic on one of the islands a bad electric storm blew up. Gustav spotted a tree standing alone in the middle of a field. "Under the tree we will bet be safe," he cried, anxious for my welfare. Before we could reach it, there

was a dazzling flash, a deafening crack, and the tree split down the center' Gustav was greatly surprised, and I nearly fainted.

A week later he arrived on a Sunday morning at my hotel with two bicycles. He thought it would be a nice way for me to see the country) and good for me to get some exercise. I had not been on a bicycle for five years, and what I needed least was exercise. Mine was a racing model – Gustav's most prized possession – with the seat high in the air, and the handlebars curved down very low. When I got into position, my nose an inch above the front wheel, I was almost standing on my head.

No sooner had I climbed on that bicycle than I realized it was a temperamental beast. I wobbled after Gustav until we reached a main street, turned and started down-hill. I passed him very quickly. I passed everything very quickly. Gustav had neglected to explain how the brakes worked. As I shot through the first crossroads against the lights, narrowly missing the policeman on point duty, I heard Gustav shout, "it is necessary to halt, Tommie. *Stopp!*"

His voice faded into the distance. Other people took up the cry as I hurtled by cars, between streetcars, past pedestrians, through more crossroads. In that position I could see very little, but the whistling of the wind in my ears, the blur of things coming at me turned my blood to water. It was a John Gilpin ride. On and on I went until I reached level ground, and slowed down to a stop. I sank on the curb, and tried to calm my shattered nerves. Five minutes later Gustav pedaled up.

"What think you – you are doing?" He was upset. "It is not allowed to behave like this in Sveden. It is to break the law."

"Break the law! What about my neck?" I was pretty upset myself.

"And my *cykel*! You are not well to him!"

"To me your bicycle has perfectly beastly been," I said tearfully"

"Please have the goodness to walk back. It is better."

"Much better!" I had no intention of ever getting on a bicycle again. I sometimes wonder if my successor to Gustav's affections ever lived to reach the altar.

Gustav felt it was only proper I should meet his family. He made it clear that they must never suspect my profession, making it sound uncomfortably like the oldest one of all. He told me frankly, "It is ultimately not possible for Swedish girls of the good family to be in *teatern*."

"By me it is understood," was my docile reply.

Gustav put the social wheels in motion, and I received an invitation from an aunt of his to attend a party at her house in the country. I was delighted. I was going to see the inside f a Swedish home and what the people were really like. I expected a country cottage, and was not prepared for a splendid estate. We

were ushered by a maid into the orchard, where his aunt was receiving. She greeted me courteously, if a little distantly. Angela would have recognized the genuine stamp of inherited wealth and breeding, and approved of Gustav's family connections.

It was a large gathering, and the atmosphere was formal and rather bleak. Cakes and handmade wine were handed round on silver trays by uniformed servants to the handsome, well-dressed guests under the trees. They were a cultivated group, many of them speaking several languages. The adults were Swedishly suave, the young people very shy. Although they were in modern dress, their courtly manners made it seem to me more like another century – the world of Strindberg's Miss Julie. It was fascinating, but a little oppressive.

I had carefully subdued my appearance – I was wearing my own clothes, having declined the girls' kind offers of their more spectacular pieces of apparel – but I could not subdue my tongue. I sensed that young people were only to speak when spoken to, but I had so much to learn, and so little time. I never stopped asking questions. Gustav's anxious looks told me that I was not behaving in a manner befitting a girl of the good Swedish family, but I ignored his signals. Here was my material in the flesh, and if I did not make the most of it, I would never forgive myself.

Gustav clearly had misgivings as to how I would ever fit into this milieu, and he breathed more easily when the young people adjourned to dance to the gramophone. It seemed for a moment like summer in Nova Scotia, but only for a moment. The smell of the sea and the sight of the harbor covered with

white sails misled me. This was a long way from Canada in more ways than kilometers. The atmosphere had relaxed slightly, but it was still starched - from shyness rather than formality. The young people danced without speaking, holding each other like glass. When the record finished, the girls were ushered back to their seats, their partners bowed from the waist and retired. My partners bowed, but were not permitted to retire. But the more I questioned, the less I understood. It was only on the surface that the Swedes appeared simple.

I was worn out and hoarse when we left, and as we drove back I decided to postpone writing the article. The world would have to wait.

The Liseberg season rolled by. It seemed hardly to have begun before it was over. Seen through Swedish glasses the world looked rosy. To me it was never to feel quite so safe and secure again as it did that summer.

As our engagement neared its end, we saw less of Mr. Miller and heard less and less of the dates that were to follow. Copenhagen, Oslo and Stockholm were no longer bandied about lightly. As Mary described it, ..A deadly 'ush has settled over the company."

It was Pat and Sally who first smelleg a rat. They had discussions with Glynis, and decided that nothing was fixed after Gothenburg. The other places had merely been bait to get us abroad, in the hope that we could be booked somewhere - anywhere - after the Liseberg. This brought forth terrible tales of shows that had folded leaving the girls stranded. They recalled the episode

of the empty box office at Llandudno, the manager who decamped with the takings at Berwick-on-Tweed, and the leading lady who decamped with the manager and the takings at Weston-super-Mare. You could walk home from these dates, but from Gothenburg we would have to swim.

We developed an anxiety neurosis. Rumors flew about. We made it our business to keep an eye on Mr. Miller's every movement. We took turns trailing him. Reports came back that he was seen in Thomas Cook's. Was he buying sixteen tickets to Stockholm or, terrible thought, one ticket to London? Word came through that he was seen drinking. Where was he drinking, and what? Was he drinking up our fares home? It was only one beer in the Cuckoo Clock, but even this did not allay our fears.

"Ah, well!" said the more experienced Glynis, getting matters into perspective, "when he starts on champagne, we can really worry!"

Finally, we could stand the suspense no longer. Sally and Pat caught up with Mr. Miller in one of his haunts. They were brief. "When do we open at the Tivoli, Copenhagen?" He blustered, then came clean. The next dates were only penciled in, but he was sure they would be confirmed.

"These things take time," he said.

"How much time?" asked Sally.

"What are we supposed to do in the interval?" badgered Pat.

Mr. Miller's idea was that we would go on half salary until something was set.

Pat and Sally reported back to H.Q. After a long conference, the experts were of the opinion that, if we were ever going to be booked, we would have been by now. It was evident to us that the Scandinavian managers knew a bad thing when they saw it. We didn't take kindly to Mr. Miller's suggestion of half salary. Even in a cheap *pension*, it would have taken some ingenuity to exist on little over two pounds a week.

We decided to wrench our return fares from Mr. Miller while he still had the money. Pat, Sally and Glynis cornered him in his hotel room. While Mary, Angela and I nervously twisted our handkerchiefs in the lobby, the war raged one floor above. They returned battle-scarred but triumphant. We listened eagerly to the details. The opening skirmish had been a threat on his part that the six of us would never be allowed to dance in any Millerette troupe again.

"We told him what he could do with his Millerettes!" was Glynis' scathing comment.

Pat then took up the cudgels. "We're not under contract. You can't keep us." Sally threatened to get him blackballed for stranding a show. "You'll never be allowed to take a company abroad again," she said. This went wide of the mark. Mr. Miller was prepared to make such a sacrifice with a light heart. The final shot, which won the day, came from Glynis. "It's up to you. Either we have our return tickets tonight or we don't go on."

The battle had been won. We were to get our tickets, which was a relief, but we were out of work. We adjourned to a nearby café to consider the future. Suddenly Glyis had an inspiration. "Why not go to Paris? We could all get jobs there." A suspicion of what Glynis might consider suitable employment flashed through my mind, but I squashed it. She had worked in Paris before, and assured us she knew all the ropes. "Why not?" echoed Mary. Angela was enchanted, and Pat and Sally thought it a wonderful idea to spend the balance of their vacation in Paris. With a few qualms, I decided to throw in my lot with them.

We began to plot in earnest. If we changed our second-class ticket to London to a third-class ticket to Paris, we would have some spare cash. We would pool our money, and one of us at least would be sure to get work in Paris. As they saw it, we had six chances of eating. Who could ask for more? Personally, I would have liked to ask for much more money, but I said nothing.

Glynis felt sorry for us and the drab little lives she thought we had in Gothenburg, and she arranged for the latest member of the Provident Society and his friends to throw a farewell party for her five colleagues. We did not know a great deal about Glynis' extracurricular life. We thought it must be gay and glamorous, if a little questionable. Returning in the small hours, she would sometimes join our family parties, where we took turns playing hostess at midnight. The refreshments were meagre – weinerbrod and coffee – but the talk was rich and sustaining. Piled on one bed amidst crumbs and coffee

cups, we exchanged theatrical reminiscences. I had nothing to exchange, but I sat drinking it all down.

Glynis would make her entrance with the scent of expensive perfume and the evening's acquisition. We would greet her enthusiastically and perhaps a little naively, with "Hello, darling! Tell us what happened." Occasionally she would impart a small snippet of information, but it was never very revealing. We would then admire her spoils. We were happy for Glynis, but it was a little saddening for us that her new clothes were too small to go into the wardrobe kitty. It was not until the farewell party that we had an inkling of part of the price paid for her finery.

The night the show closed the gallants who were to bid us farewell – apparently pillars of commercial society - appeared at the stage door. They were not in the first flush of youth, and I suspect they were ineligible. No wives were mentioned, but somehow they gave one an extramarital feeling. They confessed to being enthusiastic admirers of the Cabarethallen, but in their position it was inadvisable to pay too many visits. We were whisked away to the side entrance of a fashionable restaurant, where, after an exchange of knowing looks, and the whispered password, we were smuggled into a private room. They were taking no chances of being seen.

There was a huge spread of food calculated to make the mouths of sausage-eaters water. The shrimps, fish in aspic, lobsters, liver paté, jellied veal, cheeses and other unrecognizable delicacies would have made a beautiful sight even if they had not been edible. But such an extravagant display

outraged my Nova Scotia thriftiness. We could have lived for a week on that smorgasbord. Drink flowed like water, but it wasn't water, and schnapps has a different effect. We were so busy earing that we didn't put away enough liquor to affect us seriously, but not so our large northern friends. They were already slightly intoxicated with their own depravity - supping with real live chorus girls - and the schnapps on top of their excited condition soon took effect.

We were a large party when we started, but we dwindled fast. One after the other our cavaliers would make a lurching one-way trip to the lavatory" Some could not stagger so far, and quietly slipped under the table while we are on. But before they disappeared we had time to take their measure. It was the air of being gay clogs with fast women which shook me. To Gustav, I was a fine, upstanding young woman with high moral principles; to these individuals, I was a flossy, bit. The change was abrupt, and required a certain flexibility.

At first I endeavored to make intelligent conversation with the pink and white citizen on my right. As Glynis had let it be known they were shipping magnates, I felt obliged to throw a bouquet in the direction of ships ingeneral, and Swedish ships in particular. It dropped to the ground. Sampling the smorgasbord, I touched lightly on what we all owed to ships. "They are a lifeline," I said, getting into my stride. He didn't seem to care. I pointed out that international contact meant international understanding, but his heart wasn't in it. "All brothers under the skin!" I cried, helping myself liberally to the caviar. Propelled by the schnapps, I was sailing along on a high diplomatic, almost spiritual, level, but he was not with me. I don't think he understood

what I was talking about. I don't think I did myself, not that would have deterred me, but I felt we were out of touch.

He sat there, without a word, fixing me with a warm, fuzzy look. It slowly dawned on me that there was only one thing on his mind, and it had nothing to do with ships. While reassembling my forces to meet this situation, I heard Mary's voice clearly across the table: "Poor Glynis, what she's been through!" The girls' habit of talking before people as if they weren't there was a constant embarrassment. They believed no foreigners could understand the English language, even if they spoke it. Sally leaned over my florid partner and said in a loud, penetrating voice, "Do you know what this one just asked me?" "I can guess," I said hurriedly, fearful that she would inform the whole table. "The cheek! I put such a flea in his ear!"

I looked at my magnate, hoping he had not overheard. His glazed eyes barely flickered. Angela interrupted her inquiries into the servant problem in Sweden long enough to make a social pronouncement: "Swedish nouveau riche ." I remarked that I dared say Glynis didn't care how long they'd had money, as long as they had it. I further remarked that, if she elected to stay in Sweden, it was unlikely they would have it much longer.

When I turned back to my magnate, he had disappeared. He had not had time to reach the door marked *Herrar*; he must have joined his friends under the table. Taking advantage of the growing indisposition of our hosts, we busied ourselves surreptitiously stowing away the remnants of the portable viands to fill a picnic basket for our journey.

At the end of the evening Glynis's particular friend, the organizer of this charity dinner, was conscious enough to thank us for gracing the party with our presence, and pressed into each of our hands a Swedish note - the equivalent of a week's salary. Angela was out-raged. "How dare he!" she cried. "The oaf! I've never been so insulted!" I was more practical than Angela. We were in crying need of kronor. I felt, if we had to be insulted at this particular juncture, this was the way to do it. Angela was about to return it in her lady-of-the-manor style, when Glynis stopped her. "Don't be a damned fool! Take it. You've earned it." We had. We took it.

The party had given me food for thought. Here lay a wealth of material for a powerful sermon. Now was not the time, but one day I would pass it on to my father with my compliments, complete with text, "The Wages of Sin Is Boredom."

There was no fanfare and no red carpet for our departure from Gothenburg. I had told Gustav not to come to the station. The magnates were to see us off, and I did not wish to risk a clash. They, however, did not appear – it may have been several days before some of them came to.

Up at the crack of dawn, gay as crickets, we followed the pushcart bearing our luggage to the station. We looked spick and span decked out in our dazzling white slacks. The jaunty effect was greatly enhanced by our accessories. Angela was wearing her picture hat, which had graced many a garden party, and I my precious Saks Fifth Avenue bonnet wreathed with feathers and a

veil; these we could not risk packing. Carefully draped over Glynis's shoulders were two silver foxes (their jaws viciously clamped together at the back of her neck) so huge that she had to walk with care to avoid tripping over their tails. Silver foxes do not look their best in midsummer, particularly when worn with slacks, but Glynis was inordinately proud of them. This was the first appearance of these trophies and we were tremendously impressed; but we had to admit among ourselves that a small fur tippet would have been more in scale.

We had not appreciated the full extent of Glynis' haul until our departure. The rest of us were traveling light, but she, who had arrived in Sweden with one fiber suitcase, was now the proud owner of four cowhides. We couldn't afford porters, and as it was impossible for Glynis to stoop three inches without dusting the ground with the foxes' tails, we had to help her.

Pat said, as she struggled with one huge case, "You can't tell me this is just clothes. She's done in one of the Provident Society."

"Who's to blame her!" I replied, straining at the handle. "Perhaps she was defending her virtue." Pat gave me a look.

"We'll give him a Christian burial in the Baltic," I said cheerfully.

I liked Gothenburg, but the girls were delighted to shake the dust of the city from their feet. There was, in fact, no dust; that was one of their complaints.

It was so clean, it was almost clinical. In their view, the Swedes in washing away the dirt had overdone it, and washed away everything else of interest.

I did not feel light hearted, and as the train pulled out my courage almost failed me. "Here we were safe" Nobody could come to any harm in Gothenburg – but Paris was another matter. What was going to happen to us? But the confidence and enthusiasm of the others were infectious. I began to rally. "These are experienced women of the world," I told myself inaccurately. "They'll take care of me." It was as well I did not know that it was as a case of the near-sighted leading the blind.

We had no conception of the distance we had to cover (on my map it was only three inches) or the complexities of the journey. Tire girls pictured something in the nature of a Sunday cross-country journey from Hull to Swansea. Our suspicions were not aroused by the number of slips which made up our tickets, for we did not know each represented a connection to be made (or in our case missed). Having spent the entire day crossing the south of Sweden, we were not exactly fresh when we embarked at Trelleborg for an overnight crossing to Sassnitz, and traveling steerage in the Baltic was hardly a tonic. For hours we rolled around in the bowels of the ship, pale and limp, marveling that an inland sea could be so rough. We had time to reflect on the scale of my map. Already it seemed months since we had left Gothenburg, and we had only covered half an inch. What lay ahead in the remaining two and a half inches did not bear thought, and on a queasy stomach Sassnitz looked far from appetizing in the chill light of dawn.

Once we landed in northern Germany we lost all control of the situation. We never knew which connections we made, and which we missed; indeed, we were never sure in which direction we were moving. Stations came and stations went, but they were rarely the ones we expected. We threw ourselves upon the kind mercy of conductors, ill-informed passengers and strangers in those parts. We never argued, for nobody spoke any English, and we felt that however little they knew, it could not be less than we did. Meekly we followed anyone who would lead us on and off trains.

We met with great kindness. The passengers who misdirected us took pity on us – our appearance had already deteriorated – and shared their cold sausage (apparently an international food). The officials either bore us no malice or felt they could not hope to get blood from a stone, and we were never charged for the extra journeys.

As we set up camp for the night on the station platform at Hamburg, it somehow seemed familiar. It was my conviction that we had been in that station at least once before on this excursion. When the Paris express pulled into Hamburg it was packed to overflowing with people going to the Exposition. At the sight of "Paris" on the side of the train we were seized with a frenzy, and shoulder to shoulder we fought our way on board. Fortunately, it was going to Paris, not coming from, and we were on the last lap of our journey.

None of our fellow passengers looked as if they possessed the entrance fee to the Exposition; nor did we. We were packed in like sardines, but, alas, not on

our sides. Sitting bolt upright, we rattled along on hard wooden seats; our feet and ankles began to swell, our necks to stiffen, and we became aware of unsuspected muscles and joints" I am not well padded, and this added to my discomforts, but my attention was distracted from these minor irritations by the amorous advances of a primitive Bulgar - a nice bit of character make-up with a hairline which commenced strangely near his eyebrows. He may have been attractive to another Bulgarian, but he certainly wasn't to me. I tried to convey this to him with no success, and was rewarded by bitter looks from his overripe wife seated opposite, who seemed to be under some misapprehension as to who was making advances. I kicked him, and she kicked me. In the end I was forced to retreat into the corridor, where I joined a comparatively harmless group of passengers – a goat and some escaped chickens. Huddled with the livestock, I slept peace fully until cockcrow.

As things went from bad to worse on that interminable journey, we became more and more elated. We were not downhearted on our diet of stale buffet buns (the sweetmeats culled from the Swedish orgy were devoured early on) ; our spirits were not dampened by the lack of a water supply; we greeted the information that we were moving in the wrong direction, or had missed another connection, with hoots of laughter. We were laughing on the morning; of the second day; we were hilarious on the morning of the third; we were hysterical, but still gay, on the morning of the fourth.

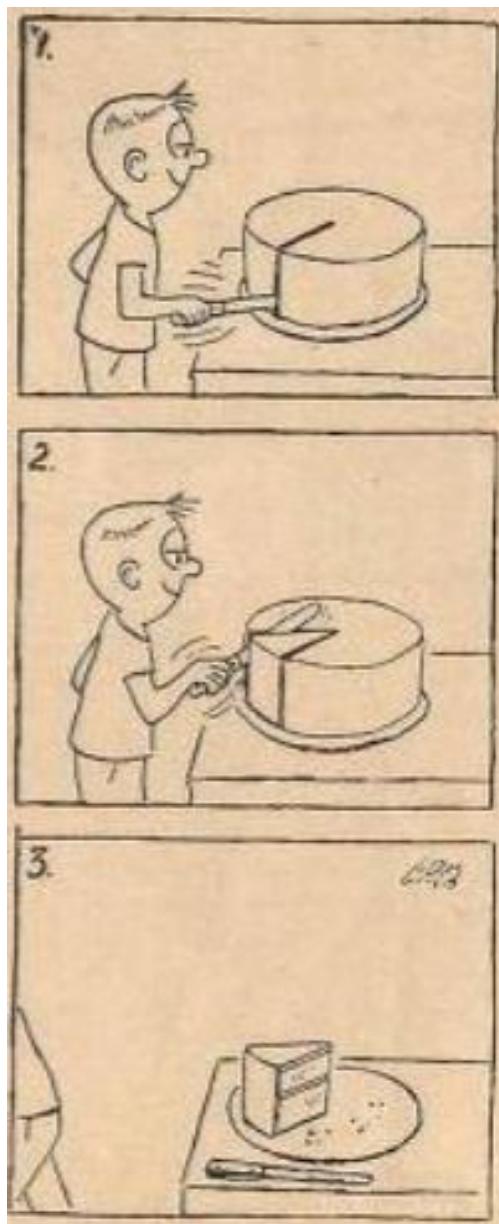
When we crawled out of the train at the Gare du Nord, visibly thinner, our faces smeared with dirt, we were still laughing. Bur the crumpled slacks told a grim story. As we collected the grime of four countries, they had changed

from white to battleship gray. Down my left leg lay a spot of chicken manure, and the grubby finger marks where the Bulgarian had pinched me. Down the right leg were the stains of orange juice, German beer, Belgian wine and the remains of an egg I had discovered newly laid in the toilette. Being reluctant to waste any protein, I had endeavored to whip it into an eggnog. The cuff of that trouser leg was a trifle frayed. It had been sampled by the goat while I was taking evasive action against my Balkan fellow passenger. Beneath the trouser legs no longer lurked the slender ankles for which I was noted or the high-heeled sandals, now too tight for comfort, with which I had repulsed and inflamed the Bulgar at one and the same time.

I threw my now veil-less and featherless bonnet in the air and croaked like a bull frog, "*Nous sommes arrivées!*" We had arrived, *sans doute*, but what now? How could six chimney sweeps, with legs swollen like stovepipes, possibly captivate Paris? As we gazed upon the scene with bloodshot eyes, no fears assailed us.

Hobbling to the Métro laden with luggage, we were in fine fettle. You can stand so much, and then something has to give. We were, I think, not quite right in the head.

Pictorial: Tommy have a piece of cake. Thanks Mom!



The Surréal and DaDa

Dada X Y Z by Hans Richter

I never understood Hugo Ball very well. He was rather tall and very thin; when I first met him he looked to me like a dangerous criminal. I took his soft speech for a technique to put one off guard. His dark, mostly black clothes and black, wide brimmed hat made him look abbe-like (another suspicious note).

When he recited his abstract poems in the enormously over-crowded DADA exhibition at the *Tiefenhoefe* in Zurich in 1917, towering over an exploding and applauding-laughing crowd of pretty girls and serious bourgeois, he was Savonarola, fanatical, unmoved, unsmiling.

He was human, nevertheless; he loved Emmy Hennings. When she could not make up her mind, whether a solid and handsome Spaniard or Ball was her favorite, he followed her with a revolver in his pocket (so she said) and searched my apartment, to learn whether the lovers were hidden there. Such problems concerned all of us, and Tzara and I had long conferences to make up the mind Emmy could not.

Of all the personalities in the DADA movement, Hugo Ball oscillated the most. By the end of 1917 he was deep in politics (in Berne, the capital) assisting the heroic Dr. Hermann Roesemeier in the editing of a democratic anti-Kaiser weekly (*Freie Zeitung*) which fought a hopeless battle against the past, present and future of All-German arrogance. He had become a hardworking, whispering diplomat ... not really. In a city that was full of

spies, intrigues and “pulls,” he was clearly one of the few idealists, whose intelligence was obviously great enough to attract political figures.

The next time I heard from him, about 15 years later, he was buried near St. Abbondio in Southern Switzerland, where he had lived with his wife Emmy. I learned that Ball had become very religious. When he died in 1927 in St. Abbondio, people from all over the Ticino (the southern, Italian-speaking canton of Switzerland) had come to his funeral, as they had come to him for help and advice during his life among them. Emmy Hennings, a protestant, always had a strong leaning towards the mysticism of the church, but Ball had made faith, the Catholic faith, finally the theme of his life. He had visited Rome, and the priests of the church respected him as one of their own. When I left Switzerland in 1941* fourteen years after his death, the people of the canton still spoke with admiration and love of his sincerity and goodness. He had become a kind of Saint. My first judgement had been very wrong, he was a good man.

Emmy Hennings, who had met and inspired some of the best German poets during her lifetime—who had always, as long as I can remember (1912), lived among artists and writers—had become a writer herself. Books about Hugo Ball, who still “occupies” part of her house in Agnuzzo, short stories and fine poems. She is now correspondent for the *Neue Zuricher Zeitung* (the Swiss “Times”), the National Zeitung and writes for magazines. She does not live among the Boheme, but with the villagers of the romantic medieval little Swiss villages near the Italian border. She still walks around with the slightly uplifted look of the mystic.

Another mysterious person, of great capabilities, whom I would love to meet again, was Dr. Walter Serner. Nobody knows what happened to him. Whether he finally settled down on a hacienda with one (or several) rich, beautiful women in South America or became involved with illegal heroin traffic in Shanghai is unknown. He was highly prolific, even before DADA, when he published a little intellectual revolutionary magazine, Sirius. He was the great cynic of the movement, the complete anarchist, an Archimedes to unhinge the world ... and to leave it unhinged.

He was as proud as he was poor. Always in an excellent tailored black jacket and striped trousers, the only ones he had, a pink round face accentuated only by a pair of rimless glasses over his lean elegant nose. He was from Vienna and was a wizard of economy, but even so he did not always succeed in having enough or even anything to eat. That he did not tell to anybody, he just disappeared. None of us knew where he lived. He stayed two or three days in bed, not eating, then he reappeared again, pink and fresh, immaculately dressed and managed life again, somehow. His point of view on women was very direct, a kind of caveman with high-class psychology. He did not look it, but he favored the violent approach. Marietta, his steady and extremely lively girlfriend, thought of him as one of the greatest characters living. (She was a great character herself.)

The audience of the “Greatest-Ever-DADA-Show” in Zurich at the Kaufleuten (1918) did not seem to look at him the same way. When Serner, sitting on the stage, elaborated his ideas to a headless dummy, to whom he

had politely offered a bouquet of artificial flowers, the audience interrupted him abruptly. At the sentence, Napoleon, also quite a tough bum,” the students and younger people on the balcony jumped down on the stage with parts of the several-hundred-years-old balustrade in their fists. The Greatest-Ever-DADA-Show ended in a free for all. When exhausted, we finally got out and looked for Tzara, we discovered him unhurt and peaceful in the restaurant in front counting the cash. It was the biggest sum DADA had ever seen.

Tristan Tzara, besides being an inspired poet, always seemed to me the greatest realist of all of us. A vital young man who decided to get the most out of everything. He was the push behind the publicity, pushing and affronting the public opinion „, as a matter of play. He represented the Latin side of DADA, coming from the little Paris of the Balkans: Bucharest. The mixture of the Germanic philosophical serious side of DADA (Huelsenbeck, Ball and Serner) with the spirited (Tzara) was a delightful aspect of this movement and its essential foundation.

Tzara was a good organizer and kept DADA going when the going was rough. Mr. Heuberger, our little printer, was more often in jail than out (for revolution ary leaflets) but Mrs. Heuberger, accustomed to such occurrences, ran her cellar business with tears in her eyes. We had to help her when her husband was “detained” to get the DADA numbers done well, by hook or by crook. It was like child birth every time.

Rather different from the versatile Tzara was his compatriot, the olive-skinned Marcel Janco, whose painted abstract plaster reliefs were in all our homes.

Where Tzara was aggressive, he was soft and rather sweet. He lived as a kind of head of the family with two younger brothers and a pretty French wife in a bourgeois flat near a church. He was the one who had really a heart. Many years later he wrote me from Bucharest that he had become an architect and that he had such a great desire to go west again (France). But then came the Iron Guard to kill thousands of Rumanians and then the Nazis again killed thousands. I didn't hear from him again.

Also from Slodki, the small, dark, extremely shy painter (Ukrainian?) nothing was heard anymore. He wore the dirtiest suits in that clean city, Zurich. But his heart was very friendly. I didn't know very much about him, but who really knows anything about such unboisterous people in this boisterous world?

And then of course there was Jean Arp, at that time still Hans (as an Alsatian then under German rule). Psychologically he stood between the Tzara-Janco and the Huelsenbeck-Ball-Serner group. For his sovereign sense of humor a small accident might testify. He was called before a medical committee at the German Consulate General in Zurich, to be examined for his mental state (what else but mental defectiveness could have led him to DADA and abstract painting?) and asked how old he was. He took a piece of paper and wrote

16.9.87

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all the way down the page. Then he added the three columns together and presented the result to the physicians. They believed him.

I don't think that Arp ever had an enemy. Friendly, polite, unchanging and without any pretensions he always made good company. He gave DADA a slightly ironic, Olympian touch. He took DADA immensely seriously, but laughed about it happily.

We met often, not only at the cafe Odeon, but at a much more attractive place, at von Laban's famous dance school. That's where Arp found his future wife (Sophie Taeuber) and where I found mine. Also Tzara and Serner were partly and temporarily entangled with the place and its inhabitants. Through this personal contact the whole Laban school got finally involved with the DADA show at the Kaufleuten and danced in abstract settings by Arp with abstract masks by Janco and the choreography by Sophie Taeuber. I don't know whether that was the first abstract dance performance ever done, but it was sensational anyhow. I know, though that the puppets Arp and Taeuber made shortly afterwards were the first abstract puppets ever used at puppet shows. They consisted mostly of thread spools joined together, decorated with feathers (to make a prince) or with pearls (to make a princess) or rags (to make the villain). They moved with a grace not of this earth and would have out-circused even Calder's circus in their purity. (They were lost later on.)

One day Tzara introduced me to a Swedish painter who had just come to Zurich from the Ticino, Viking Eggeling. He joined our group but he never was a Dadaist. He was too fanatical to be one. He was the persistent explorer of the counterpoint in painting, of a universal (abstract) language. That was exactly the direction in which I was moving too. We became friends for life in thirty seconds. Eggeling was for Tzara in a way ununderstandable, too

“classical” (“ Goethe and all that”). Eggeling came as we all did, from Cubism. The fact that he tried to integrate Giorgione and the Italian Renaissance with modern experience made him a little suspicious in Tzara’s eyes, but as it is with every new movement, people were accepted also on account of their personality. Even the “classical” attitude could go with DADA when the guy who did it went for it in its own, great way. And that Eggeling certainly did.

Eggeling influenced me deeply as an artist as well as a personality. I had visualized since I was eighteen a world set in perfect “music” of forms and colors. I had taken steps in this direction and had found the first letters to an “alpha–bet” in the Pos.-Neg. relationship. Eggeling had most valuable new clues to realize such a world and was methodical where I was spontaneous. (I enjoyed life enormously and DADA was but a confirmation of this joy.) At the same time I contributed to Ludwig Rubiner’s Zeit Echo, a magazine following the great humanitarian tradition of Tolstoi and Romain Rolland. In articles and drawings (Volks- blaetter-broadsides) I attacked the war and the social irresponsibility of the artist. The obvious contradiction between DADA and Tolstoi intrigued me. The responsibility of the artist for his individual vision seemed to exclude the responsibility of the citizen for men and mankind (and vice versa). It is a contradiction for me still today, but I found that contradiction is one of the fundamental laws of existence, which we can integrate only occasionally, if we are lucky.

Richard Huelsenbeck, one of the "founding fathers," and I met only after the war was over in Germany (1919). He had left Switzerland just before I arrived in 1916. His learned and solid mind (he was an M.D.) was nearest to Ball,

with whom he was connected by a sincere friendship. It was he who took the DADA bacillus to Germany where it was considerably colored by the revolution in 1918. He became the aggressive historian of the movement, interpreted its “meaning” and created some of its most characteristic works. I met him again thirty years later, here in New York. We are now both elderly gentlemen. We look at DADA with love. The “épater le bourgeois,” the “je m’en-foutisme” was more than just the eternal rebellion of youth; it was an action directed against the conventional routine with which the generation preceding us made war, rules, art, and us. It broke up what was past & dead, and opened the way to emotional experience from which all the arts profited and still profit.

{first published in 1948}

Pictorial: I Love Those Jugs!



I love
those
jugs!

Figurative Art Gallery
Open Sundays 10 to 6
The Atelier, West Van

End of the World by Richard Huelsenbeck

This is what things have come to in this world
The cows sit on the telegraph poles and play chess
The cockatoo under the skirts of the Spanish dancer
Sings as sadly as a headquarters bugler and the cannon lament all day
That is the lavender landscape Herr Mayer was talking about
when he lost his eye
Only the fire department can drive the nightmare from the drawing room but
all the hoses are broken
Ah yes Sonya they all take the celluloid doll for a changeling and shout: God
save the king
The whole Monist Club is gathered on the steamship Meyerbeer But only the
pilot has any conception of high C I pull the anatomical atlas out of my toe a
serious study begins
Have you seen the fish that have been standing in front of the
opera in cutaways
for the last two days and nights ...?
Ah ah ye great devils—ah ah ye keepers of the bees and commandants With
a bow wow wow with a boe woe woe who today does not know what our
Father Homer wrote
I hold peace and war in my toga but I'll take a cherry flip
Today nobody knows whether he was tomorrow
They beat time with a coffin lid
If only somebody had the nerve to rip the tail feathers
out of the trolley car it's a great age

The professors of zoology gather in the meadows
With the palms of their hands they turn back the rainbows
the great magician sets the tomatoes on his forehead
Again thou hauntest castle and grounds
The roebuck whistles the stallion bounds
(And this is how the world is this is all that's ahead of us)

Dedicated to Elizabeth Huelsenbeck (1948).

Pictorial: The Story of my Life



Going around in circles ...

After the Cabaret Voltaire by Emmy Hennings

I'm going home early in the morning.
The clock strikes five, it is already day,
But the light is still on at the hotel.
The cabaret has finally closed.
In a corner children curl up,
The workers are already going to the market
The church goes silent and old.
From the tower ring the bells,
And a whore with wild curls
It still wanders there, out of date and freezing.
Love me purely for all my sins.
Look, I've been up more than one night.

Novella: Pas a Deux by Patrick Bruskiewich

[Vancouver] I happen to be walking by the stables that morning when she was washing down her mount after an early ride. It was a calm and quiet, rather hot August Sunday morning. He was a large grey stallion, perhaps middle age as horses go. She was a tall Amazonian, as tall as her mount. He was tied to a stake in the center of the paddock. She stood on the far side of her mount from me. I could see that she had a bucket of soapy water at her feet and a coarse brush in her hand. The top of the stallion gleamed with her handy work. She was now taking to his underside.

I happen to be walking by the paddock on the public path way through the park and so I stopped to watch them both. I had seen the two of them ride past me on previous Sunday mornings here in Hastings Park. Today I was given a chance to see them both, the mistress and her mount, after their riding session. I felt almost as an interloper, a voyeur intruding on an intimate moment between them both.

She did not see me for several minutes, or perhaps just decided to ignore me as I stood up against the wooden fence and she continued to stroke his belly, from the front of his belly to the middle of his stomach. If she had seen me perhaps she would have paused and not continued to do what she was doing. Or perhaps she would have just ignored me.

By brushing his underside the stallion was becoming agitated. As the coarse brush came closer to his sex he started to pull against the rope that tied him to the stake at the center of the paddock.

He snorted, but she flouted him and continued. From the stable beyond I could hear a pair of hoofs kick the wooden walls. The stallion turned its head towards the stable. At the time I thought nothing of it.

When she brushed the underside of his marble purse the horse glared over at her. But again she did not stop and he began to step his hind legs back and forth, back and forth. He snorted again, this time with a groaning sort of a grunt.

The stallion turned its head towards me and eyed me. He flared his teeth at me and I pushed back from the fence and smirked back at him. It was as if he was pleading for me to get her to stop. I stood where I was. I guess I could have said hello or something like that to get her to stop, but something deep within me told me to let things be. And so I stayed silent.

The stallion let out another snort and lowered his head and looked down at himself. Still she continued with the coarse brush. It was then that I realized why the stallion was pleading, for he had become unsheathed and the soft pinkness of him was starting to steal into view.

Still did not stop. Instead she continued with the brush, but now with a slower and more careful stroke along the best of him. She was now also stroking his belly back and forth with her bare, free hand. This was turning out to be much too much for the poor horse who had now become completely unsheathed and a bit unhinged.

The splendor of him even shocked me for he was twice the measure of what a neophyte to the scene would have expected.

He snorted. I knew the stallion could have easily pushed her away yet he didn't.

It was then when she noticed me. She looked up at me between the horse's four legs and said 'Hi.' The horse slowly turned its head and looked over at me a second time.

I waved back, pushed back from the fence and was about to walk away when she said "I have seen you before on the riding path."

I leaned back up against the fence and answered her "yes we have ... perhaps I should be going?"

"Why ..." she asked.

How the hell was I suppose to answer that? So I stayed silent.

"Don't feel as if you have to run off ..." there was an edge to the way she said this.

"Perhaps I should!" I lowered my head and looked down at the ground as I said this.

“What! And miss the finale!” On the word ‘finale’ the horse snorted as if on cue. I looked up at the stallion and sensed in his eyes desperation for his circumstances. I wondered whether he was truly enjoying his predicament, or whether she was taking certain liberties.

“If I didn’t do this he would be a bit wild. There is a mare in heat in the stable and well, he doesn’t like to be locked up all by himself with her about. He has been kicking the stable walls and I am worried he will hurt himself.”

“Oh …” I stared down at him.

“The mare is a competition horse and its owner does not want to foal her just yet.” The stallion perhaps sensed her mistress was talking about his predicament, for the best of him was showing itself to be unbreakable.

“I see,” I said this before I realized the double entendre. She giggled and my face grew warm with my blush. Then there was silence … as she went back to what she was doing.

From the stable beyond I could make out the snort and commotion of another horse. Then the kicks from the stable walls made sense …

I should have continued on my way but instead I stayed put. She had been honest with me. I no longer felt like I was intruding. Perhaps she knew she was taunting me with “*… and miss the finale!*”

She dropped the coarse brush into the bucket and I saw she was wearing a black rubber glove that went up to her elbow, covered in soapy water. With her other bare hand she stroked the stallion's belly and with her gloved hand she began to stroke the best of him.

The effect it was having on the stallion was something strangely amazing to watch. I closed my eyes for a moment and just listened. I had heard these sounds before.

Once as a teenager while visiting my uncle's farm I witness a grossly overweight bull mount a reluctant heifer. After a frantic and dramatic chase the bull finally forced the heifer into the corner of the fenced yard outside the barn. It was early afternoon and the cow was waiting to be milked. How the bull got into the pen I did not know, but the eldest of my uncle's three sons was known to have a wicked streak to him and well ... I was a city boy he felt needed to be shocked.

And shocked I was that afternoon as the brute chased the heifer around and through the throng of cows and finally into a corner and into submission. The bull was like one of Picasso's Minotaur ravaging a helpless vestal.

The cow's head poked through the fence. The fence creaked and groaned under the combined weight of the heifer pushing back at him and the beast having his way with her. The other cows were huddled on the far side of the ring with their hinds turned to the two, as if afraid to bear witness.

From across the yard I could see that the heifer was struggling, foaming at the mouth and fighting for her breath and bewailing at the same time. With each thrust of the bull into her, the milk from her udder was being spilled onto the soil beneath her. The bull was on top and inside her at the same time. His brutality was over in perhaps a minute. Then the huge bull pulled himself out of the cow and staggered away exhausted, dragging the best of him along the ground beneath him. It must have been a meter long ... pink and raw ...

The heifer stood there for a few minutes and then did not bother to go into the barn but instead staggered back through the gate in the fence and tottered clear across the field before she toppled to the ground. She was still there at night fall when I happen by the field on my way in the farmhouse. The following morning I watched her wondering and waited for the cow to enter the barn to be milked. She was the last to come in and was very late that morning.

I could not bring myself to go into the barn that morning, and decided instead to keep an eye out for the bull. He spent the entire day lounging in the shade of a large tree in his own field. It seemed odd that such a brutal intercourse would lead to the birth of a new life. It seemed odd that such a brutality was a necessity for the continuation of life. It just seemed odd ... in so many ways.

The stallion snorted. I reopened my eyes. As I watched the stallion I wondered if he had his way with the mare, whether he would be like the Minotaur with the heifer at my uncle's farm? Instead here the stallion was tied to a stake being taunted by his mistress. The stallion's haunches were tense. His

breathing deep with expectation. His steps herky-jerky. His eyes bulged from his head.

He began to snort and bay at the same time. ‘*Stop ... please stop ...*’ it seemed to plead.

From the barn I could hear more kicks and commotion.

Yet his mistress continued her taunt. Slowly and deliberately ...

He struggled at the rope, frantic to get loose and race into the stable. He tried to kick his mistress aside but she was too quick and nimble for him. She stepped out of the way of his lunging hind leg.

Then she appeared. The mare from inside the stable. She had broken free from her pen and was frantic.

I yelled “Watch out,” just in time for the stallion’s mistress to turn and get out of the way of the lunging mare. She chased the woman out of the paddock. She had just enough time to roll under the fence before the mare was atop her, digging into the ground with her front leg.

Then the mare turned to face the stallion. He was now perfectly still. She took her time to saunter over to the stallion. He tugged at the rope with all his strength but could not free himself. The mare walked over to him but stayed a few meters apart from the stallion. She was sizing him up.

The women had by now walked over and was standing beside me. “Thanks.” she said as she brushed some wood chips off of herself. “This will be interesting to watch.” We both turned to the two horses.

The stallion snorted at the mare and turned his flank to her. Hesitantly the mare took a small step towards the stallion. Even from where we were a good six or seven meters away we could see that the stallion was shivering.

The stallion shook its head back and forth in frustration, snorting as he did this. Still she remained standoffish. The stallion dug at the ground with her front legs then tugged frantically at the rope.

“Do you think I should go and untie him?” she asked me. I just shrugged my shoulders. She started to climb the fence when the mare charged a few steps in our direction. She climbed down. “I guess not!”

“No …” I said. “It’s a *pas a deux*. ”**

It was then that the mare turned herself around and took a few steps back towards the stallion until his nose was nearly into her backside.

The mare knew what she was doing. She took another tiny step back and the instant the stallion’s nose touched her flank … like the cow and her milk the stallion spent himself across the ground in a fury.

In the midst of his fury the mare galloped away back into the barn as the stallion snorted and frayed his head back and forth in frustration.

The whole scene was surreal. I could not turn away ...

The stallion's mistress was giggling. "Now that was quite a finale!"

I said nothing but merely turned and started to walk back the way I had come. I could not bring myself to look back.

As I walked away, it was a few steps beyond before I realized that I too was staggering ... herky-jerky.

** A *pas a deux* is French for a dance between two partners.

Pictorial: A Little Venus in her Oyster Shell ...



If she was still around today she would be 125 years old ...

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